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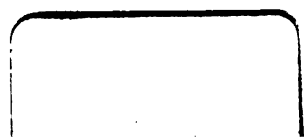
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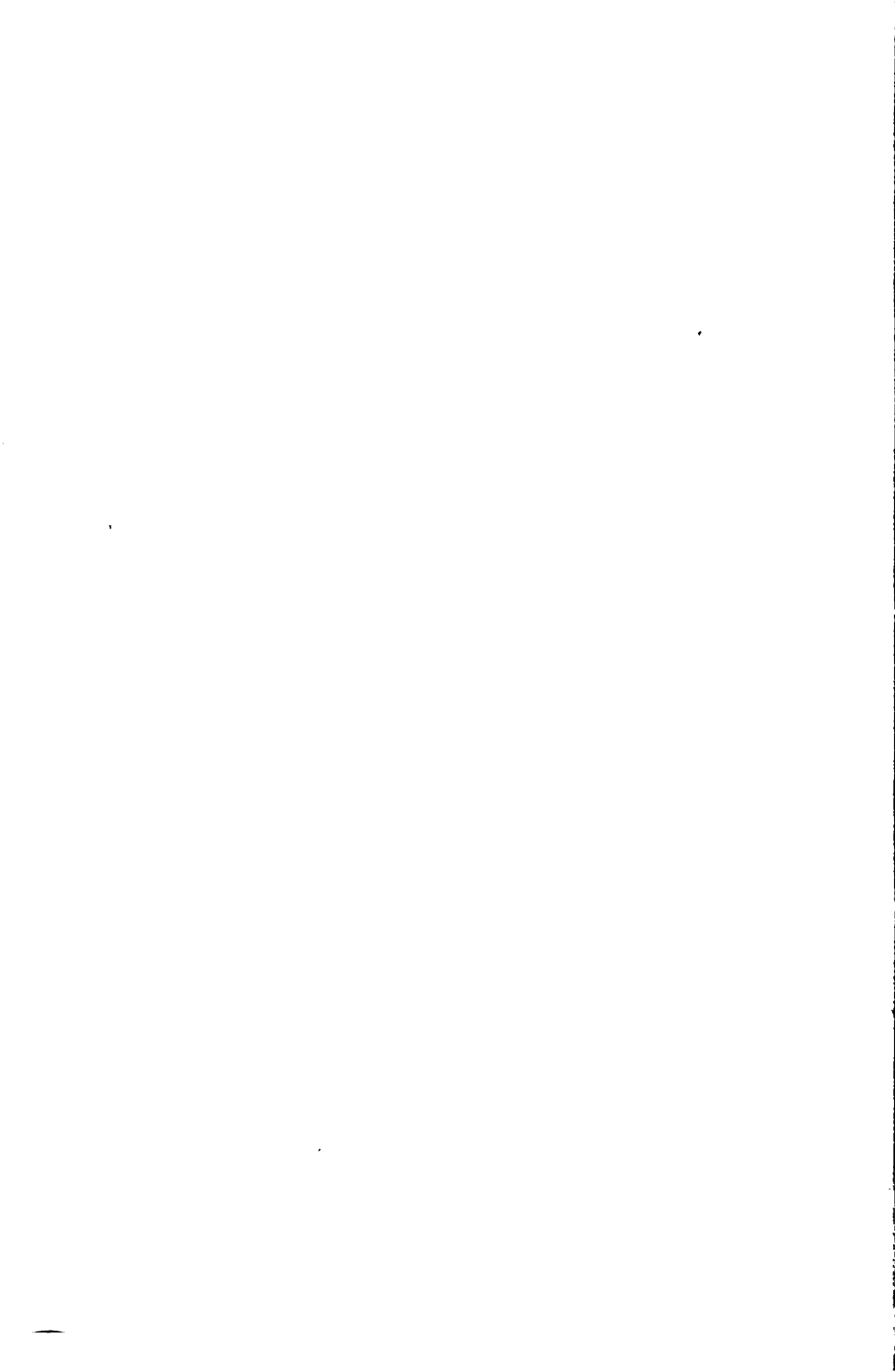
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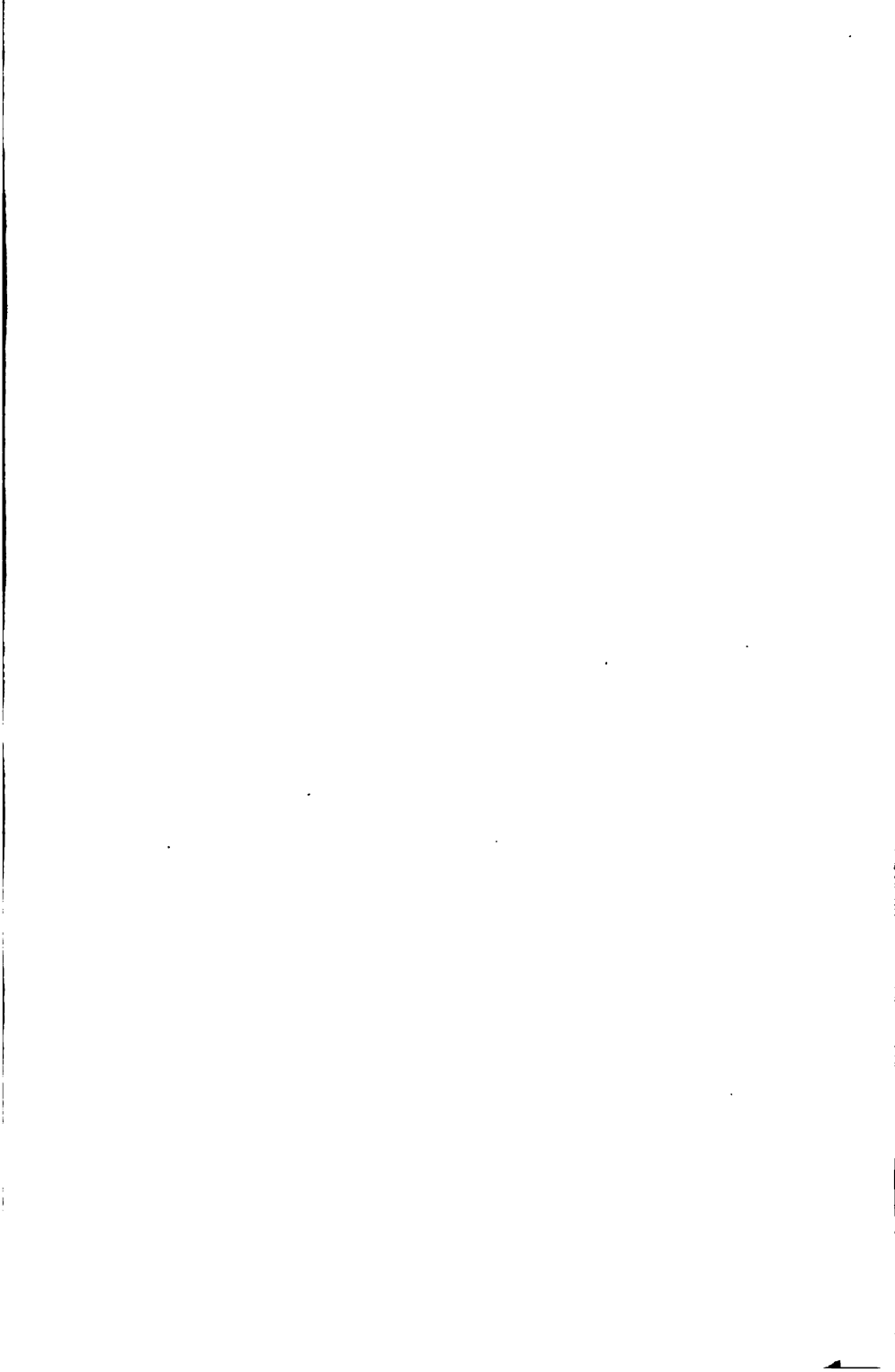
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1. A.





SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF SELECT FICTION

VOLUME XXXIII.

JANUARY-MARCH, 1899.

THIS MAGAZINE IS PLANNED TO COVER THE
STORY-TELLING FIELD OF THE WORLD, AND
ITS SELECTIONS WILL BE OF THE BEST PRO-
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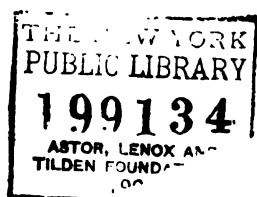
"Were I called upon to designate that class of composition which should best fulfil the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous fields of exertion—I should unhesitatingly speak of the short prose tale. The novel is objectionable from its length. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself of the immense force derivable from totality."—EDGAR ALLAN POE.

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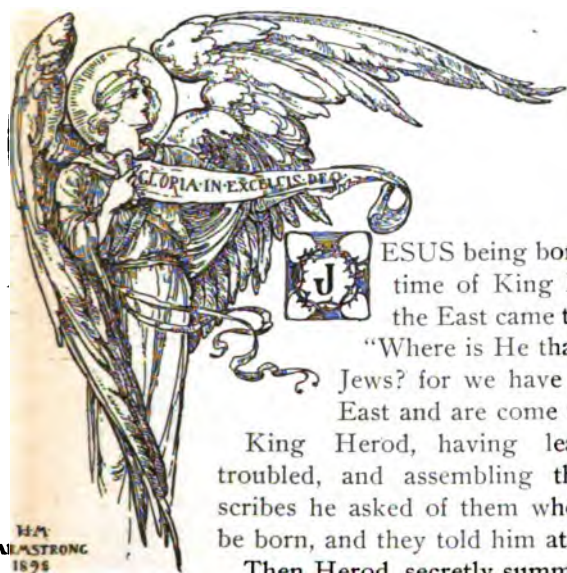
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THE PRINCESS LILITH*

BY JULES LEMAITRE



ESUS being born at Bethlehem, in the time of King Herod, Wise Men of the East came to Jerusalem and said: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East and are come to adore Him."

King Herod, having learned of this, was troubled, and assembling the chief priests and scribes he asked of them where the Christ should be born, and they told him at Bethlehem.

Then Herod, secretly summoning the Wise Men, inquired about the time when they had seen the star, and sending them to Bethlehem, he said to them:

"Go; inform yourselves exactly about this little child, and when you have found Him, let me know, that I, too, may go to adore Him."

But after the Wise Men, conducted by the star, had found and adored the Child, warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went into their country by another way.

Then Herod, seeing that the Wise Men had mocked him, was very angry. . . .

The Princess Lilith, daughter of King Herod, was lying on a purple couch, thinking, while the negress Noun swayed a great fan gently back and forth above her brow, and her cat Astoroth slept at her feet.

The Princess Lilith was fifteen. Her eyes were deep as the

* Translated by Emar Soule, from the French, for Short Stories Illustrations, by Helen Maitland Armstrong.

waters of a well, and her mouth was like an hibiscus flower. She thought of her mother, Queen Miriam, dead when Lilith was yet quite small. She did not know at all that her father had killed his queen through jealousy, but she knew that in a secret chamber he kept her body, embalmed in honey and spices, and that he wept for her yet.

She thought of her father, King Herod, so gloomy and always ill. Some-

times he shut himself up in his chamber, and they heard him crying aloud,

for he thought that he saw again those whom he had caused to be put to death—his brother-in-law,

Kostobar, his wife Miriam, his sons Aristobol and Alexander, brothers of Lilith; his mother-in-law, Alexandra; his son Antipater, the doctor of laws, Bababen-Bouta, and many others. Though Lilith knew nothing of these things, her father inspired in her a great terror.

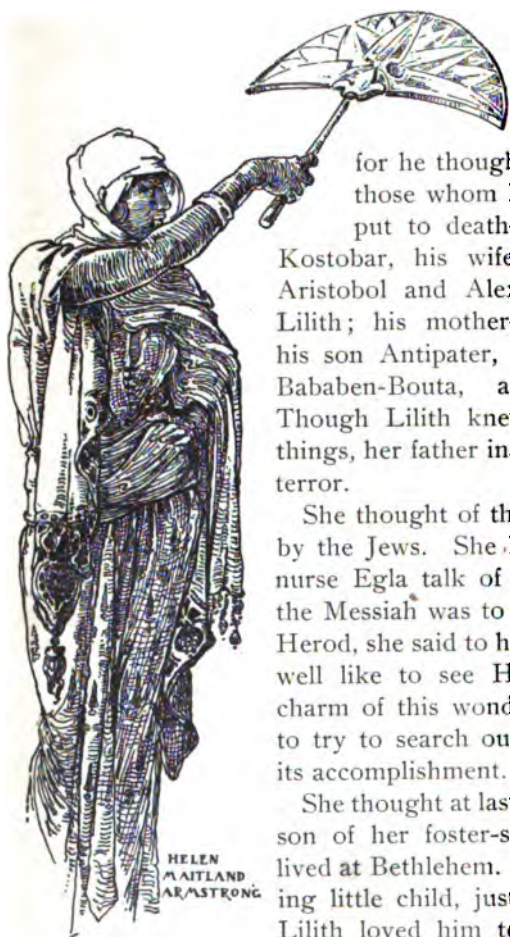
She thought of the Messiah, expected by the Jews. She had often heard her nurse Egla talk of Him, and although the Messiah was to be King in place of Herod, she said to herself that she would well like to see Him, for the hidden charm of this wonderful idea drew her to try to search out how it might find its accomplishment.

She thought at last of the little Hozael, son of her foster-sister Zébouda, who lived at Bethlehem. Hozael was a laughing little child, just beginning to talk. Lilith loved him tenderly, and almost

every day she had her mules harnessed to her cedarwood chariot, and went with the negress Noun to visit the child.

Lilith thought all this, and that she was very lonely, and that without the little Hozael she should weary herself much in the world.

Then Lilith went into the garden to walk under the tall syc-



HELEN
MAITLAND
ARMSTRONG

mores. Then she met old Zabulon, who had once been captain of the king's guards. Herod had replaced his Jewish guard by Roman soldiers, but having confidence in Zabulon he had charged him with surveillance over that part of the palace which the princess inhabited.

Zabulon, infirm now for many a year, was sunning himself on a stone seat. He was so bent with age that his ample beard lay in folds on his knees.

Lilith said to him :

"Thou art sad, old Zabulon."

"I have learned from a centurion that the king has ordered all the children of Bethlehem under two years to be killed at daybreak to-morrow."

"Why?"

"The Wise Men announced that the Messiah is born, but it is not known how to recognize Him, and they did not come back to tell whether they had found Him. In killing all the lit-



HELEN MATTLEND ARMSTRONG

tle children of Bethlehem, the king makes sure that the Messiah will not escape him."

"True," said Lilith; "that is very well conceived." Then, after a moment of reflection: "Might one see Him?"

"Whom?"

"The Messiah."

"To see Him it would be necessary to know where He is, and if it were known where He is the king would have no need to kill all the little children of the village."

"'Tis so," said Lilith, and she added in a low voice, as if fearing her own words: "My father is very wicked." Then suddenly: "And the little Hozael?"

"The little Hozael," said Zabulon, "will die like the rest."

"Nevertheless, I am perfectly sure that little Hozael is not the Messiah. How could he be the Messiah? He is the son of my foster-sister."

"Ask his life of your father," said Zabulon.

"I dare not," said Lilith; "but I will go with Noun to get little Hozael myself, and I will hide him in my chamber. He will be safe, for the king comes there almost never."

Lilith had her mules harnessed to the cedarwood chariot, went to Bethlehem with Noun, entered the house of her foster-sister, and said to her:

"It is quite too long since I have seen Hozael. I wish to take him to the palace, and keep him a day and a night. The child has no special need of your care. I will give him a hyacinthe robe and a necklace of pearls."

And she said nothing at all to Zébouda of that which she had learned from Zabulon, so great was her fear of the king. But she noticed that her foster-sister's face was radiant with an unaccustomed light.

"Why art thou so joyful?" she asked.

Zébouda hesitated a moment, then replied:

"I am joyful, Princess Lilith, because you love my child."

"And your husband, where is he?"

Zébouda again hesitated.

"He has gone to the mountain to gather his flocks."

Noun hid the little Hozael under her veil, and Lilith and the good negress re-entered the palace as the sun was going down behind Jerusalem.

When Lilith was in her chamber she took Hozael on her lap. The child was laughing and trying to seize the long earrings of the little princess, when Noun ran in from the ante-chamber, crying:

"The king! Here is the king!"

Lilith had but the time to hide Hozael at the bottom of a

great basket, and to cover him with some pieces of bright silks.

King Herod entered with heavy steps, his back bent, his blood-shot eyes deep-set in his cadaverous face. His bracelets and neck-chains sounded as he moved, and his chin was agitated by a trembling which shook the whole length of his plaited beard.

He said to Lilith :

"Whence comest thou?"

She replied :

"From Jericho."

And she lifted to the king those eyes, tranquil as the water of a well.

"Oh! how she resembles her!" murmured Herod. At this moment a little cry sounded from the basket.

"Wilt thou be quiet!" said Lilith to the cat Astoroth, who was sleeping on the carpet. Then she said to the king :

"My father, you seem to be sorrowful. Would you that I sing you a song?" And taking her lyre she sang a song about roses. And the king murmured :

"Oh, that voice!" and he fled as though seized with great and sudden terror; for the gaze and the song of Lilith had brought back to him the voice and the eyes of the Queen Miriam.

A little while afterward Lilith went into the garden and saw old Zabulon weeping.

"Why dost thou weep, old Zabulon?"

"You known why, Princess Lilith. I weep because the king wishes to kill that little child who is the Messiah."

"But," said Lilith, "if He were really the Messiah men would not have power to kill Him."

"Yet, is it God's will that we aid him?" replied Zabulon. "Princess, you who are kind and compassionate, you ought to warn the father and mother of this little child."



"But where shall I find them?"

"Ask the people of Bethlehem."

"But ought I to save Him who will drive my race from this palace? Him through whom I shall some day perhaps be a poor prisoner or a beggar of the streets?"

"That time is far off," said Zabulon; "the Messiah is as yet only a very little child, more feeble than the little Hozael. But



HELEN MAITLAND
ARMSTRONG

the Messiah will have power enough to be king without doing harm to any one."

"But is He the Messiah?"

"Yes," said Zabulon, "because He is born at Bethlehem at the appointed time, and because the Wise Men have seen His star."

"He must be beautiful, though He is so little. Dost thou not think it, Zabulon?"

"It is written that he shall be the most beautiful among the children of men."

"I am going to see Him," said Lilith.

When night came Lilith wrapped herself in veils of black, and her bracelets and the golden circlets of her arms and ankles, her neck-chains and the precious stones with which she was adorned, gleamed through her veils as softly as the stars in the sky. She resembled the night, whose name she bore. For Lilith, in the Hebrew tongue, means night.

She went out secretly from the palace with the negress Noun, and she thought on the way :

"I should not like the Messiah to wrest the throne from my father, for it would be hard for me to live no longer in a beautiful palace, to no longer have beautiful robes, jewels and perfumes. But neither should I like to have this little new-born child put to death. I will say to my father, then, that I have found Him, and in return for this service I will pray him to spare the child and keep Him in his palace. So He cannot harm us; but if He be the Messiah He will make us to share in His glory."

Lilith found Zébouda in prayer with her husband Methuel. They seemed full of a great joy.

Then Lilith employed a ruse.

"Hozael is well," said she. "I will bring him home to-morrow. But since you know where the Messiah is, take me to Him. I have come to adore Him."

Methuel was a simple man, little inclined to suspicion. He replied :

"I will take you, Princess Lilith."

When they arrived at the place where the child was, Lilith was greatly astonished, for she had expected some extraordinary magnificence, without knowing what, and she saw only a stable built against a rock, and under its roof of thatch an ass, an ox, a man with the air of an artisan, a woman of the people, beautiful indeed, but pale, fragile and poorly dressed, and in the manger, on some straw, a little child who at first seemed to her like many others. But as she approached Him, looking into His eyes she saw that which does not belong to a child—an infinite sweetness, more than human; and she noticed that the stable was lighted only by a radiance which came from Him.

She said to the young mother :

"What are you called?"

"Mary."

"And your little child?"

"Jesus."

"He has a very serious air."

"He weeps sometimes; but He never cries!"

"Will you allow me to kiss Him?"

"Yes, madam," said Mary.

Lilith stooped and kissed the child on the brow, and Miriam was half resentful that she did not kneel.

"And so," said Lilith, "this little child is the Messiah?"

"You have said it, madam."

"And He will be King of the Jews?"

"For that hath God sent Him."

"Then He will make war, kill many, and dethrone Herod or his successor?"

"No," said Mary, "for His kingdom is not of this world. He will have neither guards nor soldiers; He will have neither palace nor treasures. He will levy no taxes, and He will live like the poorest fisherman of the Lake of Genaseret. He will be the servant of the humble and of children. He will heal the sick and comfort the afflicted. He will teach truth and justice. 'Tis over hearts, not bodies, that He will reign. He will suffer, to teach us the worth of suffering. He will be the king of tears, of charity, of forgiveness. He will be the king of love, for He will love men, and to those whom earth does not satisfy will He show how their heart may find its contentment and joy. He will have inexhaustible pity for those who, even though sinners, shall keep this gift of love and the virtue of feeling themselves the brothers of men, and of preferring others before themselves. Without doubt He shall have a throne——"

"Ah, you say it yourself," said Lilith, still resisting.

——"But," Mary went on, "this throne shall be a cross. 'Tis on a cross that He shall die, to expiate the sins of men, and in order that God, His Father, may have mercy upon them."

Lilith heard with astonishment. Slowly she turned her head toward the manger. She saw that the child was looking at her, and under the caress of those wonderful eyes, vanquished, she fell on her knees, saying: "They never told me these things."

And she adored Him.



The good negress Noun had long been on her knees weeping.

"I know," said Lilith, rising, "that King Herod is searching for the child to put Him to death. Take the ass and flee!"

By narrow ways, winding about the round hills of Bethle-



hem, Jesus and His mother, and Joseph and Lilith and the negress and the ass came into the plain.

"'Tis here," said the princess, "that I must leave you. I am the Princess Lilith, daughter of King Herod. Do not forget me."

And while Mary, mounted on the ass, which Joseph was leading, and holding Jesus in her arms, departed by the right-hand way, Lilith followed with her eyes, in the darkness, the aureole surrounding the divine brow of the little child. And just at the moment when, behind a sycamore wood, the pale, mysterious light was disappearing, behold, on the road at the left, with the tramp of horses, the hurtling of iron, and the gleam of helmets under the rising moon, the squadron of Roman soldiers marching toward Bethlehem! . . .

And every one knows that the Princess Lilith was one of the holy women who followed Jesus the day of His sacrifice, and that the little Hozael was among the chief of the disciples of Christ the Saviour.

A COMEDY IN A CABRIOLET*

BY ANNA ROBESON BROWN.



THE evening was chilly enough when I drew up at the Red Rose. The lights of that comfortable inn had greeted me, gleaming through the darkness for some distance, and conjured in my mind a pleasant anticipation of supper before a fire of oak logs. In this I was not to be disappointed. No sooner had the wheels of my cabriolet sounded upon the stones of the inn yard, then out came the hostess and the chambermaid, the boots and the ostler, each more profuse in ejaculations of welcome than the last. I knew the Red Rose well, as a place I could rely on for my entertainment, and the hostess knew me well as "an open-handed young gentleman as ever stepped." They were rejoiced to see me therefore—I was shown into the parlor, and my orders taken for supper. Such cheer lay before me in the crackling fire and neat room, that I regretted my plans would not allow me to spend the night, and pursue my journey in the morning. But that must not be—I was an expected guest at Moorfields Hall, the owner of which I had never met, but who I had been told was the testiest, most punctilious old squire in the country. Therefore, I gave orders to have my horse and groom well fed, but the former left in harness, ready to proceed so soon as I had finished my meal.

The occasion of my journey had some importance. My excellent relatives had sent for me to come down into the country, and there make the acquaintance of a young lady of suita-

*Written for Short Stories. Illustrations by Florence England Nosworthy.

ble fortune, to whom they desired to see me wed. I had heard much of Miss Phyllis Barrington, but nothing to prejudice me against her, and it seemed to me she might as well have the chance of becoming Lady Fennell as any other. Her family was the equal of my own, she herself had the reputation of a beauty, and it stood in her favor, to my thinking, that she was country-bred. I was not over-fond of fashionable London ladies, and had cherished the dream of marriage with a sensible, intelligent companion, and a life spent rationally at Fennell Place. When these proposals were received therefore I was disposed to entertain them favorably, and an interchange of letters was speedily followed by my departure from London with my groom, my good chestnut mare, and my new cabriolet. During the journey my mind had been much occupied with all these weighty matters, and I was sensible of great weariness when I came into the cheery inn parlor. I drew a chair to the fireside, and sinking back, plunged into a reverie, in which the figure of Miss Phyllis Barrington played no small part. This I was not destined to pursue undisturbed, however. A noise of wheels and voices in the yard made me aware of the arrival of other guests, and presently my hostess entered in much trepidation.

"The house was unfortunately so small," she explained, courtesying, and asking pardon. "And a young couple just arrived in a broken-down hackney coach. If Sir Roger would be so kind, a screen might be placed about this end of the room—but she had no other place, for the present, to offer them." I cut short her apologies, telling her a screen would do very well to secure my privacy, so instantly one was brought, encircling me and the hearth. My supper shortly after followed, and a table having been wheeled to my elbow I fell to with an appetite sharpened by country air.

Now, although I sat within the hostess' screen, snug and silent as a statue in a niche, and quite apart from the larger half of the room, yet the barrier by no means kept the sounds out of my ears, nor could I to save my soul refrain from some curiosity. My fancy wandered persistently to the other side of the screen, and interpreted what words reached me from thence, and the dialogue which took place was colored by my imagination. This involuntary eavesdropping did not distress me, for it was unreasonable to suppose the pair were not aware of my presence. Shortly after the sounds of their entrance—

the rustling of a lady's cloak, etc.—the cavalier opened the conversation. He had a harsh voice and boorish accent, which I instantly took a distaste for. His first remark was a simple one enough, to the effect that he hoped they would not delay to bring in supper.

A sigh of weariness was all answer to this, but he did no better in his second speech. "For," said he, complainingly, "I am deucedly cold and starved, too, and would be the better for a glass of ale."

Still no answer. I began to be curious to hear the lady's voice. "How I regret this unfortunate accident," was his third effort. This time he was answered by a sweet, tremulous young girl's voice asking, "How long was the delay likely to be?"

"A couple of hours at least, madam. Long enough to partake of a comfortable supper and a glass or two of ale before proceeding. 'Tis said they have the best ale in the Shire."

"I never touch it," she made answer shortly.

The brevity of her reply seemed to strike him.

"Although, believe me, madam," said he, "that I regret every instant which delays the hour when I shall become the happiest of men!"

A second heavy sigh greeted this compliment, and accentuated my interest. This was not an ardent elopement certainly. I waited for the lover to attempt some means of consolation, but no such idea entered his head. I could hear him moving restlessly about.

"I hope they will not be careless about the chicken," he remarked in a tone of anxious concern. "Indeed, I think it is a risk to trust them. So few cooks understand the broiling of a chicken."

"I am not hungry," replied the lady to these observations.

"Perhaps I had better go and consult with the cook."

"Pray do not let me detain you, sir!" I was glad to hear her summon up a little spirit.

"I daresay the hostess will attend to your wants, madam. You have money a-plenty, I believe?"

There was a certain eagerness in the rascal's tone which made my blood boil. The lady replied coldly enough:

"I have sufficient for my wants, sir!"

"Then a few hours' patience, madam," he rejoined with much gallantry, "and your troubles will be over!"

"I desire to be alone, sir, if you please!" she vouchsafed to this, and her cavalier stepped to the door with alacrity. I heard him make for the bar, and in a moment his voice sounded, calling for brandy. The young lady heard it, too, and from the other side of the screen came another deep sigh, and then a sob. Now a woman's sobs are not a good sauce to one's supper, and I had moreover been affected by all I had heard. I am the last man in the world to interfere between true lovers, but here, it seemed, was a case for my chivalry. This was some silly country maid, already repenting her folly, and far from her natural protectors. There was that within me which felt fatherly toward her—it went against me to go away and leave her to that oaf. There came another sob, and



thereat I hesitated no longer, but sprang up and turned the corner of the screen. The lady who was seated in a chair facing me looked up scared. At sight of her I became doubly determined, for hers was the loveliest face I had seen in a twelve-month. By her dress she was no village maid, for it was rich, and in the fashion, while her age was not above nineteen. At my approach she ceased sobbing, pushed aside her brown curls to look at me, and straightened in her chair. She sat there with swimming eyes and trembling underlip, such a child

and so forlorn that my manhood rose within me. I made her a deep reverence.

"Pray forgive the intrusion, madam," I began.

"Oh, pray leave me, sir," said she, faintly.

"But I cannot hear you sob t'other side of the barrier, madam! It spoils my supper!"

She gave me a faint smile for this. "You shall be plagued no more, sir, I promise," said she bravely; and thereat sobbed again more bitterly than before.

"Now, you see, madam, to what you compel me," said I, and took a step forward. "I must make a guess for what you are weeping so bitterly. If I mistake not, it is for a carriage, a fast roadster, and a good driver to take you back whence you came."

A slow blush came up into her cheeks and she shook her head. I continued: "It chances I have just such an article ready harnessed in the stable. Pray let me offer it and my services. Your home perhaps—is not far off?"

I could see a gleam of hope spring into her eyes at this; but she still shook her head. There was a pause, and then I spoke gravely:

"I have unwillingly overheard much that has passed madam," I said, looking at her steadily, "and I cannot but see that you contemplate some folly, which will end in wretchedness and grief. I am a total stranger to you, but I cannot see you pursue such a course without a protest. Whatever may have induced you to leave your home, I see that your heart is not in this flight."

"Oh, that is true!" she murmured brokenly.

"Then think—my carriage is ready harnessed. You can return to your home and no one be the wiser!"

"But he——?" she made a gesture toward the door, but her eyes were still fastened on mine.

"We can evade him easily enough," I returned with a shrug.

The struggle in her face was plain.

"You have a father, doubtless, madam," I put in adroitly, "measure his kindness and indulgence by this man's—is not the balance on his side?"

The thought conquered her, as I had conjectured.

"Oh, I have been mad—wholly mad and wicked!" she cried, "but I am sufficiently punished. You are right, sir, I cannot

go on with that man. I see you are kind—if you would take me home—if you would take me home!”

She sprang up, wrapped her cloak about her shoulders in feverish haste, and seized a bandbox that lay near at hand and evidently contained her belongings. For reply, I slipped into my own driving-coat and put a gold piece on the table to pay my reckoning. I began now to feel a zest of the adventure, which had put out of my head my journey, Moorfields Hall, and the lady awaiting me.

I knew every door and passage of the inn, and opening one



which led the shortest way to the stable-yard, I reconnoitred. I had no mind to encounter her cavalier in so public a place, where the gossip would reach half the country by morning. Chance had it that the way was clear, the passage dark and silent, so without a by-your-leave I took the lady on my arm and we sped down it. The outer door was quickly and noiselessly opened—she had not time to tremble before we were out of doors.

Our flight was favored by the darkness, and the fact that

the supper was just beginning. I whisked the girl across the yard, she clinging to me and the bandbox, and around a corner of the stable. It is true that at this point the whimsicality of the affair struck me, and I had much ado to keep from laughing aloud. Here was I eloping with this unknown maiden, while her proper cavalier attended to the ale-tap. It was laughable enough.

"Look, madam," I whispered her, "is not that your friend, shadowed against the kitchen window? The glass he holds is not the first, I'll warrant!"

"Oh, what must you think of me?" she whispered back, and shuddered, drawing closer.

"That you are a sensible girl to turn back in time," I answered, as I pushed back the stable door. Here the circumstance of the supper hour favored us again, for the stable was deserted. I found my mare and my cabriolet easily enough, and with great caution got them into the yard. Indeed, I might have made twice the noise unnoticed, for the laughter and song in the kitchen of the inn would have drowned anything but an earthquake. Among the voices I heard my groom's cheerfully upraised, and I chuckled to myself at the thought of his face when he went at eight o'clock to fetch out the carriage.

The girl was waiting for me, shaking with fear. I handed her in, got in myself, picked up the reins and in a trice we had gained the high road and left the Red Rose behind us.

"And now whither?" I asked my companion.

"My Great-Aunt Marjory lives but eight miles away," she told me hurriedly, "and that is nearer than my home, and perhaps—I might not be able to get into the house unobserved—and it grows late—and my father——" she left the sentence unfinished, but I understood.

"I've no fancy for a broken head myself," said I, "so let it be Great-Aunt Marjory."

"I can make some excuse—explanation," she ventured.

"Oh, doubtless," said I briskly. "I have always been held good at that!" She considered me gravely in silence, and we trotted on for awhile. She had ceased to tremble, but sat by my side hugging the bandbox. By and by I ventured a question or two, and so got the story from her. It was much as I fancied, a marriage flung at the poor child's head as if it had been a bombshell, a convenient gallant in the shape of a neigh-

boring squire, and the precedent of romance. I read her a lecture on her folly, and talked to her like a father.

"Now see what unreasonable prejudice," said I, "to fly from a man you've never seen! Doubtless he's a very pretty fellow, and I dare swear worth more than the gentleman we've left in the kitchen of the Red Rose. You should take pattern by me, madam, for I've come down into your country on a similar business. I've never laid eyes on the lady, but do I flee from her for that? You'll grow wiser as you grow older."

"You cannot be over five-and-twenty yourself," she retorted.

"Does not that," said I, "make my wisdom more remarkable?"

"Maybe the lady will not have you," said she.

"Maybe not," I replied, "but when I turn back to London to-morrow I shall at least take with me the consciousness that I came very near to offering her the chance."

"You have changed your mind then?" she asked in surprise.

"Oh, much has happened since the morning," I replied, and silence fell again between us.

"Pray, madam," said I after awhile, "have you a brother?"

"I have, sir."

"And do you think there is any likelihood—it being dark and my voice hoarse—that Great-aunt Marjory will take me for him?"

"Not the least in the world, sir!" she answered with a sparkle in her eye, which wonderfully lighted up her face.

"But Great-aunt Marjory must be old and deaf, and——"

"She is both, sir; but my brother is but ten years old!"

"In that case," said I, resignedly, "we must make up something else between us." At this point our conversation was interrupted by the distant noise of horses' feet on the high road behind us; in the stillness of the evening they came distinctly to our ears. My companion gave a frightened start, clutching my arm.

"Oh, if it should be——?"

"But it isn't, madam; it isn't. Look out and see if you can see anything!"

The sound was very near to us when she obeyed me. In the starlight it was possible to see some distance, and she had no sooner looked than she gave a shriek, and clung to me again.

"My father's carriage!" she cried.

There was nothing to be done for it but flight. In the uncertain light and with all the circumstances, I could not flatter myself that her father would stop to hear explanation. The mare was weary, but I laid on the whip, and she made a brave run for it. On we dashed, the girl shrinking beside me, and on thundered the carriage after us. I soon saw I could not hope to distance the two coach horses, and an irate old gentleman had already got his head out of the window and was bawling for me to stop.

"I've got to pull up and trust heaven," said I grimly. For answer she pointed with a trembling finger to two tall gateposts in some shrubbery to the right—and I understood. We dashed between these posts in fine style, and drew up at Aunt Marjory's door with a flourish. When the carriage followed—the fat horses white with foam—I was composedly handing out the lady and the bandbox.

"Not a word of the other fellow on your life!" I told her. The coach stopped, the groom tumbled off the box, the door opened with a bang, and out popped a purple-faced old gentleman armed with a blunderbuss. The girl did not hesitate one second, but taking him around the neck, cried:

"Father, at last!" and fell to weeping heartily on his shoulder.

I could see that the old gentleman was mightily disconcerted. He dropped the blunderbuss to put an arm around his sobbing daughter, but fixed his eyes on me with a glare of fury.

"You young——" he began, but the daughter interrupted him:

"My preserver, father, dear!" she cried. "This gentleman has saved me from peril!"

"Saved you!" cried the old gentleman in a fresh fury. "Why, you fled from me with this rogue in a cabriolet along the highway! And here I find you, Phyllis—with this blackguard—pulling up at a strange house——"

"Why, father, it's Great-aunt Marjory's!"

The old gentleman started as if struck, looked up and down and then at me.

"God bless my soul, so it is!" said he.

I judged it time to put in a word here.

"There is a misunderstanding, surely, sir," I said with dignity. "If I may venture to explain, I lent this lady my

services and carriage to convey her to this place. Finding ourselves pursued we naturally fled——”

“Oh, father, I shall never so forget my duty again! Forgive me, dearest papa!” cried the girl; and held tight to the old fellow’s neck. He was in a complete bewilderment, which I completed by stepping forward.

“If you will accept my card,” I said, “my name is Roger Fennell, at your service!”

For reply he first choked, and then wrung me by the hand.

“Sir Roger!” said he, when he could speak, “what an encounter! Am I, in truth, indebted to you for my daughter’s safety? Oh, Phyllis, that you should leave your father’s roof at night and seek your aunt’s—this is marvelous, sir; my thanks——”

“It was a pleasure,” said I, beginning to understand.

“And I will never be so foolish again!” whispered Mistress Phyllis, her face still hidden from me on her father’s shoulder. Squire Barrington—for, of course, it was he—patted her hair reassuringly.

“On the high road alone at night, my love,” he said brokenly. “What madness! What might not have happened but for Sir Roger—oh, my dear friend——” and he would shake me by the hand again.

I saw that all was safe, and drew a breath of relief. Mr. Barrington lifted his daughter’s head from his shoulder and looked gravely into her eyes.

“Another time, my dear,” he said, with a seriousness which in some way made me like him, “when you and I have had a quarrel, do not run away from me. And I, for my part, will remember that the inclinations of the young cannot be forced. Think of the anxiety you have caused me, Phyllis.”

I think the maiden would have wept again at this, if it had not chanced that suddenly a window was thrown open in an upper story of the house, and a female voice screamed out above us:

“Murder! thieves!”

“God bless my soul!” said Squire Barrington at this, “we’ll frighten the old lady into convulsions! It’s your nephew, madam; do not be alarmed!”

“And I’m here, aunt!” cried Phyllis in her turn.

“And your humble servant, madam!” said I, making my best bow to the window.

A monstrous nightcap was thrust out and surveyed us. When it crossed my mind what strange things must meet the old lady's sight, I could not restrain myself, but broke into peals of laughter. Her nephew and niece, the two carriages, the panting horses and open-eyed grooms, myself—it was no wonder, to my mind, that Great-aunt Marjory's nightcap remained in the window as if paralyzed, till Mr. Barrington once more addressed her.

"Pray, let us in, madam, and we will explain!" said he, and thereat the nightcap disappeared. In a few moments we were admitted by a very tremulous old lady bearing a candle. The squire entered, then his daughter, followed by myself, making a low reverence. The girl took her venerable relative impetuously round the neck, and the warmth and tenderness of this embrace seemed to be the best cure for any fright Aunt Marjory had received.

"Bless me!" she ejaculated, "my little Phyllis—at this hour! It is very late, my dear! And your good father, too—I hope I see you well, nephew? But I do not understand——"

"I will explain fully later, my dear aunt," said the squire, "if you will permit me first to give orders to have the horses put up," and he bustled away.

"But, nephew," protested the old lady, and toddled after him. Miss Barrington and I were left alone together, in a shadowy dining-room, lit by a single candle flame. I forebore to look in her direction for an instant, but she took a swift step toward me.

"How can I thank you? All your goodness," she murmured, standing before me. The charm and sweetness of her face struck me anew.

"It was nothing," said I, "nothing at all, believe me." And I looked into her eyes.

"Shall you really—change your mind and return to London to-morrow?" she asked me, the color rising in her cheeks at the words.

"That depends upon circumstances," I replied steadily. "Shall you be of the same mind as the morning, and refuse me even the chance of your better acquaintance?"

"Nay," said she smiling, "many things have happened since the morning."

"Let me tell you," said I, throwing some earnestness into my voice and gaze, "that I would die rather than be guilty of

discourtesy, so that if your good father should proffer me his hospitality I see not how I could well refuse—do you?”

“There’s my hand on it!” she replied, and gave me the smallest hand in the world, which I lifted to my lips.



“I am glad, Sir Roger, to see you friends with this wild girl,” said the squire’s voice behind me. “You will, of course, return with us to Moorfields in the morning—and, Phyllis, my love, will you run and ask your aunt if a decanter of her old Madeira is in the sideboard?”

JOHN DRURY'S DETAIL*

BY CHARLES FREDERICK HOLDER



FIVE men sat in a small dining-room of the Gridiron Club, London. It was a notable group, and for years it had been the habit of those who formed it to dine together occasionally. The tall, powerful man at the head of the table, following the smoke of his Turkish cigarette into airy nothings, was Sir John Lennox, Bart., the most distinguished scientist of the day; a dilettante, a soldier and traveler as well. By his side was Trevelyan, whose pictures had given him fame and fortune. Near him sat Maclise, the novelist, whose light had not failed in a decade of remarkable productions, and whom the Spectator had pronounced a genius. Beneath the clock was Herndon, a famous war correspondent, a pasha under the Sublime Porte, whose haggard face and leathery skin came from seven years' imprisonment in Khartum, the city of the Mahdi. The fifth man was De Force, a publisher and editor of one of the foremost illustrated weeklies, but so modest a man that the great world rarely heard his name. He was sitting in a large oak chair, his arms thrown over the back, looking into the fire, as though lost to his surroundings, the flames playing in whimsical shadows over his finely cut features.

"De Force," said Herndon, whirling a ring from his cigar into the air, and then projecting a smaller one through it, "do you remember that a year ago you promised us the history of that remarkable detail which you gave a man on the old Mickme of the P. & O., in the Bay of Bengal?"

"Aye," replied the publisher, rising and moving over to the fire, and glancing at the clock, "I remember, and a condition was that I could find Drury. I am happy to say I have heard

*Written for Short Stories.

from him, and I have asked him to dine with us to-night. If he comes," continued the publisher, again glancing at the clock, "I, as one principal, will tell what I know of the incident, and he can supplement it. If he does not come, I have nothing to relate, except the fact of his disappearance and the several mysterious communications which I have received from time to time."

It was one minute to eight and the party waited for the expected guest in silence. As the seconds ticked themselves slowly away, Maclise bethought himself of the fact that at every tick of the clock a human being was born or died, and mentally fell to repeating, "Tick life, tick death; tick life, tick death," in an endless fashion. He had never realized how much there was in sixty seconds; what an infinity of time was stored up in the conventional minute. But finally the end came, and as the soft musical chime of the clock pealed out the hour, the door opened.

"Mr. Drury," announced the servant, and a tall, slender man, with deeply-set, magnetic eyes, entered the room.

"Drury!" exclaimed De Force, with an intonation in which his friends recognized the relief he experienced at his appearance. The two men clasped hands heartily, then the newcomer responded to the greetings of the others, and in a few moments the conversation became general.

John Drury proved to be a charming companion, a delightful raconteur, and without appearing to do so became the spirit of the feast. Literature, art, the sciences were discussed; but the subject in which they were most interested was not broached until cigars were lighted, then De Force, who had taken his place in the high-topped bench in the fireplace, glanced at their guest and said:

"Drury, it has been our custom for several years to meet once in six months at a dinner, after which each man relates the most remarkable experience he has had in the interim. A year ago I promised to tell the story of our joint adventure, if, in the meantime, I could prove it. This is now possible, and I should be glad to know if you are willing to supplement my story by your own, and so clear away what has been one of the greatest mysteries I have ever heard of. If there is any reason why you cannot or do not wish to speak, we will let the matter pass. Of course, you will pardon our somewhat natural curiosity."

Drury had risen and was standing before the fire, looking over the heads of the company at the door, as though listening, and for a moment he did not reply. When he did, it was as though he had awakened from a dream.

"I shall be happy to comply," he said, "but when I assure you that my life is in great danger, if I am connected with the incident, you will pardon me if I ask that whatever is said be considered confidential. In a word, gentlemen, my life is in your hands. I am no longer John Drury, but George Leonard Hexcomb."

"The donor of the fine collection of arms to the British Museum?" interrupted Maclise.

"And the purchaser of the prize painting of the Royal Academy?" asked Lennox.

Drury bowed assent, and all present knew that they were listening to a reputed Australian multi-millionaire, who had made many rare and valuable gifts to art and science and public institutions within the past six months.

"To give the incidents in their natural sequence," continued Drury, "I will ask Mr. De Force to begin."

"In 18—," said the publisher, "I received private information from a source which could not be questioned, that we were to have war with India, and I determined to send out my best correspondent and artist at once. As I was not feeling very well I decided to make the trip myself, returning by the next steamer. The man I selected was John Drury, our guest. Nothing of importance occurred until we entered the Bay of Bengal, when one night, the hottest I have ever experienced, a night when every one was on deck, we sighted a singular object that looked like a pillar of light. The ship seemed to be sailing through fire, the brilliancy of which amazed me, though I was informed that it was nothing but the ordinary phosphorescence of the sea. As the ship rushed on she seemed to have the gift of Midas, turning the water into gold. There were great comets, with tails of lace trailing behind, that appeared to be moving through a starry heaven of their own, and it was these and other forms which, churned up, converted the sea into a blaze of radiance.

"The tower-like light was first observed on the port bow, and soon attracted the attention of every one. As we looked, I turned to Drury, who was standing near me, and laughingly said:

" 'There is a detail for you. Go aloft and work it up; it's the chance of your life.'

"Whether Drury took my words in jest or earnest, he alone can tell; but he disappeared in the darkness, and I see him to-night for the first time since the occurrence. Your health, Drury," he added, turning to that gentleman; "your health and happy return!"

The men rose to their feet and toasted their guest, whose bright eyes glanced nervously from their faces to the door.

"Mr. De Force," he began, "has given you what might be termed the first chapter of the story. I accepted his suggestion as an order, went aloft and crawled out upon the main-yard, holding myself in position by the lift. I did not return, as he has said, and have never seen him from that time until to-night, when he has done me the honor to invite me to meet you. Before I continue, permit me to read the singular report of a Parsee shipowner to the priests who constitute the sect or body which controls all Parsee matters. The paper is the equivalent of a state document. How I obtained it is not germane to the question, and I will only say that it was at great risk.

"These people, as you know," continued the speaker, "are fire worshipers, and the magi are a class of priests in India of great antiquity, and were presumably the priests of the old Medians; but they are best remembered for their famous revolt during the reign of Cambyses, when they made a desperate attempt to reassert their power and put Gomates, one of their own sect, on the throne. But he was deposed, as you know, by Darius, and the faith of Zoroaster was declared the official religion. The Parsees, who still hold to the ancient religion of the magi, were originally Persians, and in that country are indicated by a persecuted sect known as the Guebres; but in Bombay they represent the wealth of the native population, and number between seventy-five and eighty thousand. I am particular in giving you these details, as they have a bearing upon the story which Mr. De Force has begun. Their religion is a complicated one, which involves the worship of fire. It is the Parsee who refuses to bury the dead, but deposits the body in a circular tower or dockma, which we call the tower of silence. Here the dead are torn to pieces by vultures and various birds of prey, their bones being finally destroyed by combustion.

"Among the Parsees, those of the most rigid school, there is a belief that the half mystical Zoroaster will return to the faithful, just as some Christians believe in the second coming of Christ, and the Mohammedans think that Mohammed will return; and it is to this belief that I invite your especial attention. The following statement is a translation of an account of the reappearance of Zoroaster by a 'mollah' or 'hadji,' a Mecca pilgrim, to the Panchâyat, which controls their secular affairs. I will not attempt to give you a literal translation, though its florid style would interest you, as the main facts of the case are what we desire. The man was named Mamoud Ali, and he was a fire-worshipping Parsee, who had been to Mecca several times, and was a 'mollah.' Like all Parsees, he worshiped money as well, and had been on a long trading trip on a vessel owned by himself, but in charge of a sailing master. His statement is as follows:

" 'We were, O holy dastûr, returning from a successful trip to Arabia, Persia, and various ports of India, where we had exchanged goods, opium, pearls, red coral, gold and silver brocade, tea, myrrh and spices. Our shipping master estimated that we were one hundred miles from Bombay, and we were praising Zorasthustra one night for his goodness, when the watch gave a cry of warning, and rushing to the head of the ship we saw an appalling spectacle. The night was so dark that sky and water seemed to join, and ahead of our ship, not far distant, rose a gigantic figure of fire. It was moving rapidly, and before its sublime presence the wind fell away and the ship drifted on a sea of glass. The crew fell upon their faces, murmuring, 'The Atishbahrâm!' the temple of fire. The gigantic object, that reached from the vault of heaven and that walked upon the sea, approached rapidly, and the men, fearing to look upon its face, rushed below. I gave myself up for lost, O holy dastûr! but fascinated by the wondrous sight, clung to the rigging. Then the fiery figure fell upon our ship, seized her in its arms and threw her upon her beam ends, as though in anger, and flooded the decks with fire and water. Yet, through all this, O dastûr, I clung to the rigging, though partially insensible. When I recovered, the sails and rigging were rent and torn, the vessel partly wrecked, and as I rose there stood a stranger, a man of pale countenance and eyes of fire—he who had come over the waters in garments of fire.

" 'I prostrated myself before him, calling aloud, "Zorathus-

tra has come !” at which he raised me up and spake in an unknown tongue. The crew came creeping up, and at sight of the stranger threw themselves prostrate at his feet. He came naked from the cloud of fire, and we gave him the richest of garments, at which he seemed pleased, and smiled upon us. Such, O dastûr, was the coming of Zoroaster. The rest you know. I brought him to Bombay, where he was installed among you, receiving the homage of our people. He is the divine personification of Zoroaster. He has communicated with us and given us the ancient sign of the Guebras.’

“Here,” said Drury, looking up, “is a clipping from a late Bombay paper, which may constitute a link in the story. It is headed, ‘Remarkable excitement among the Parsees! No event in the history of the Parsees for the last century has created so much excitement as the reported arrival some months ago of the ship of Mamoud Ali, a well-known Parsee merchant. He is said to have brought the reincarnated Zoroaster, and every man on the ship is reported to have sustained him in his statement. This famous half divinity of history came aboard the ship in a cloud of fire, the captain and crew falling before him. The newcomer was accepted by the Parsees and by the Panchâyat, the dastûrs, mobeds and herbads, the three classes of Parsee priests, who have poured riches and honors upon him. So far no white man has seen the new light, so sacred is his person; but it is safe to say that the new arrival has all the influence of the Mahdi, and has had the effect of stemming the tide of English influence in the direction of liberal religion. The bogus Zoroaster has been secretly living in a temple or palace in the outskirts of the city for four years, and so quietly have the Parsees conducted their affairs that no hint of the new god was obtained by the outside world until the present week, when the facts were received by the Herald, as given. Whether the government will interfere remains to be seen.’

“Now,” said Drury, replacing the papers in his pocket, “I will ask Mr. De Force to continue his recital.”

“I can do that in a few words,” said De Force. “After you went aloft the steamer was stopped on account of the appalling object dead ahead. Some thought it was a vessel, and one of the men sang out, ‘Sail O!’ and in the confusion orders were given by every one. But on came the cloud of fire, that now took the form of an enormous column, seemingly a mile high.

It appeared to be fifteen or twenty feet in circumference at the centre, where it bent like a bow, and one hundred and fifty feet or more wide at the base, where it apparently rose out of a mass of cream-colored or golden light. We could not escape it, and soon it surged by us with the roar of ten thousand railway trains, flooding our decks and throwing the steamer almost upon her beam ends.

"It was a marvelous escape, and not a man aboard could explain the phenomenon, or had seen anything of the kind, though some Parsees said that it was Atishbahrâm—the 'temple of fire' of Zarathustra. The vessel was uninjured, but after the excitement was over it was found that one man—Drury—was missing, and I reluctantly concluded that he had been swept overboard. I returned to England on the same steamer, following out my original programme, and on arriving at the office found that the same mail had brought a full report from Drury of the wonderful phenomenon, together with a picture of the pillar of fire, drawn in his graphic manner. But of himself or his whereabouts not a word was given. Within five years I have received several communications from him, all postmarked London. A short time ago I received a letter stating that he was coming to see me, so I wrote to the address given, inviting him to meet us here to-night. I am happy to drink to his health, and shall listen to the conclusion of his story with an eagerness second to none of you."

Drury had maintained an imperturbable countenance during the series of recitals, but as De Force concluded, and he responded to the toast and glanced at the rich color of the port, so suggestive of the heart of the ruby, a smile stole over his hitherto impassive features.

"When I went aboard the P. & O. steamer with Mr. De Force five years ago," he said, "if any one had told me that I was to become the head and centre of the remarkable mysteries that have followed me, I should have doubted their sanity. But there is a Parsee proverb to the effect that everything comes to those who do not seek. You have followed me out upon the yardarm of the steamer, and from there I will take up the chain of events which have had so notable an influence in shaping my subsequent career.

"As I climbed out upon the foot-ropes and swung my leg over the yard, holding by the lift, I fastened my eyes upon the strange object which I was to describe with pen and pencil. I

was amazed at its colossal size. It was like a stream of fire sharply cut, rising from the sea to the very heavens, standing out with startling distinctness against the black night. That it was moving there could be no doubt, coming on with a roaring, hissing sound that was especially distinct, there being no wind. I could hear the cries of the men below me; became aware that the ship had stopped, then realized that whatever the object was it was about to strike us. I cannot say that I was afraid. I believe that my strong desire to see and impress it upon my memory overcame everything else, and the last I recollect was that the pillar was blazing before me; that the upper portion was over my head a mile or so in the air; then a frightful, roaring sound filled my ears, and I was whirled upward in a blaze of light.

"I lost my senses, for how long I do not know, but when I really recovered I found myself on the deck of a small brig, and a dark-eyed native kneeling before me. As I staggered to my feet I saw that my clothes had been torn from me. Presently numbers of natives came out of the hold, as though in fear and trembling, and as the first man said a word to them they dropped upon their faces before me. They were such piratical looking fellows, with their dark hair, big, black eyes, and swarthy skins that I at first thought I had fallen into bad hands; then seeing that they appeared to be afraid of me, I deemed it best not to undeceive them, so I raised my hands over them in a seeming incantation and assumed an air of authority I certainly did not feel. A few years before I had been detailed to write up the sect of Guebres, a delegation of which came to London, and by chance I discovered one of their secret signs, a peculiar grip.

"As the men stood around me, I offered my hand to the leader, and gave him this secret sign as an experiment. It had a marvelous effect upon them. They fell to the deck as though dead, and I was obliged to force them to stand. They finally led me to the cabin and brought in the richest of stuffs, and I soon found myself attired like a prince in robes so heavy in gold that I could hardly move. The captain gave me a box of gems, threw a necklace of pearls about my neck, and placed a ruby ring that was worth a king's ransom upon my finger. The cabin was given up to me, and the captain himself served me. The men, who dropped upon their faces whenever they

came near, brought a huge bronze lamp into the cabin, which was kept burning night and day.

"I was confident of one thing, that no harm was intended me, so I decided to allow them to do what they would, having an eye for business, and believing that the adventure would create a sensation when written up for the paper.

"We reached Bombay in a few days, where the captain went ashore in a small boat, returning shortly with some natives I took to be priests, and whom I found were dastûrs or Parsee priests of the first class. They also prostrated themselves before me, and made me lavish gifts. Then came a party, which I afterward learned was the committee of Panchâyat, composed of six dastûrs and twelve mobeds; men who had entire charge of the secular affairs of the Parsees. The presents these men gave me in gems I estimated at not less than a quarter of a million rupees. I did not understand their language, so did not utter a word, and accepted what they gave me. One man presented me with a ruby which was hollowed out and supposed to contain a hair of Mohammed, which I had made into a matchsafe.

"For two days I received the wealthy Parsees in this way, who, by their gifts, made me a rich man many times over. I was then invited to go ashore, a boat covered with a canopy and richly decorated with gold stuff being brought alongside. I saw that the greatest secrecy was observed, and at this time could not determine whether I was a prisoner or not. As near as I could judge, we went five miles up the river, and then landed. Here I was provided with a conveyance, and after a short journey we reached a beautiful spot, a native palace, part temple, in the centre of a park of four or five hundred acres. I was received here with every mark of reverence and honor; indeed, if I had been a god I could not have expected more adoration. An hour every day I received visitors—natives and Parsees—who always brought valuable gifts, and who, I knew, were fire worshipers. Indeed, the most attractive part of my palace was the hall of fire, in which a large light was always kept burning, and at which I was supposed to meet my visitors.

"I soon picked up the Parsee language, and one day began to question one of the women, a beautiful creature, who must have been a Georgian slave. She had addressed me as Sublime Zoroaster, who, I remembered, lived five or six hun-

dred years before Christ, and by careful questions I learned that the Parsees believed that I was Zoroaster risen from the dead for their redemption and salvation, and that I had stepped out of a cloud of fire upon the ship of Mamoud Ali.

"This opened a flood of light, but I confess that the life had so charmed me that I could not relinquish it, and to make a long story short, I remained in the palace, living the life of a grand mogul, up to within a few months, when I learned that the story of the coming of Zoroaster had reached the ears of the English missionaries, who were asking the government to make an investigation. I saw that my time had come, and as I had frequently made trips into the country I had but little difficulty in arranging my escape and shipping my riches. I one day left the palace and again became John Drury.

"It would have subjected me to great danger to have avowed myself, as I had become the possessor of many religious secrets. It was equally impossible for me to return the gifts, as I did not know the donors; indeed, I believe the gems to have been taken from old Indian and Persian idols.

"This is my story," said Drury in conclusion. "There is one thing I cannot explain," he added. "I do not know how I was transferred from the yardarm of the P. & O. steamer to the Parsee brig."

"Perhaps Sir John can enlighten you," said De Force, turning to the scientist.

"Of course, it is all speculation," replied the latter. "It was a marvelous experience, quite a modern Sinbad story, with all the charm of the original. I will give you my theory. Luminous waterspouts are known, especially in the Bay of Bengal, where the water is filled with minute phosphorescent animals and plants. I assume that this extraordinary pillar of fire was a gigantic waterspout, which at night appeared luminous. It passed by your steamer, just grazing her, caught Mr. Drury and whirled him up, as a waterspout or whirlwind easily could; then the Parsee brig being close at hand she was also struck, Mr. Drury dropping upon her deck, half drowned during the impact, where his appearance from a cloud of fire one hundred miles from land, was taken, very naturally, by the superstitious Parsees as the second coming of Zoroaster. In any event, Mr. Drury," added Sir John, "I know I express the sentiments of my friends when I say that your experience is composed of material from which miracles are made."

THE CHRISTMAS EVE CONCERT*

BY GRANT ALLEN



AM glad you are prepared to accept my terms," said the manager; "and now, if you please, what songs will you sing? We want their names at once, as we must get out our announcements and programmes and advertisements immediately. Time presses." He glanced at the sheet of paper he held in his hand. "Let me see: how does it read? 'Signor Giovanni Metelli's Great Christmas Eve Concert of Sacred Music. Madame Lydia de Meza, the famous American cantatrice, will sing'—what shall we put down? The *Amore Divino*?"

The famous American cantatrice drew herself up to her full height—she was a tall and handsome woman, just past her prime, with traces of Cuban blood and some faint reminiscence both of the negress and the Red Indian. "No," she answered haughtily, for she was an imperious creature. "Not the *Amore Divino*. I do not approve of it. It has no soul in it."

"What then?" the manager asked, leaning forward with marked politeness, a lithe, keen-eyed man, pencil in hand, ready to take down the great singer's words as she uttered them.

"How should I know?" Madame de Meza answered, with a genuine air of inspiration. "It comes—my song. I sing what is forced upon me. I am not like all these commercial singers, who get up their little parts pat, and can bring forth any one of them with equal ease whenever an impresario pays them enough for it. That is not my way. I have studied my art—oh! how hard; but I cherish it still as a gift from heaven—cherish it as a treasure held in trust for humanity. When I walk upon the platform I never know what I am going to sing.

I just cast my eyes round upon my audience and take their measure. Then I murmur a little prayer, and wait for guidance."

"A prayer!" the manager cried, astonished.

"Yes, a prayer," Madame answered solemnly. "In a minute the guidance comes; some inner prompting tells me what piece will then and there be best for that public. If it is a sacred piece, well and good; it may touch some hearts. If it is a secular piece, well, too; it may be blessed in its own kind, for all art is to me, in a high sense, sacred. I shall wait and see. When I stand face to face with your people, signor, I shall cast my eyes about and know what to choose for them."

Signor Metelli gazed at her in blank astonishment. Was this woman mad, or was she only affected? In spite of his Italian name, which he had assumed as a matter of business, he was born plain John Mettle, of Bradford, and he was a hard-headed Yorkshireman, who had no sympathy with, no comprehension of, this strange, wayward American. "But we must put down something," he went on, fingering his pencil nervously; "we can't leave it quite blank. You are the star of the list, you know."

"Put it down, 'Madame Lydia de Meza will sing two selected songs,' if you like," the handsome American answered. Then she smiled at him curiously. "Look here, Signor Metelli," she went on, "or whatever else you call yourself. You don't understand me. You think this is just a singer-woman's freak. But I tell you it isn't. You may call me superstitious, if you choose. I daresay I am a little bit superstitious. I have Spanish blood in my veins, and black blood, too; a drop of Carib from Cuba, a drop of Seneca Indian from North America; but at heart I'm a New Englander, a Puritan woman. I've been singing here in Europe, on the public platform, for thirty years, and, thank heaven, I have my voice still, and I have my husband and my children. I don't look upon my art as a toy, I look upon it as a priesthood. Why did God give me this voice? Was it not that I might use it for the good and the hallowing of my fellow-creatures? I use it for that, and I try to do what better work I can with it. Sometimes I succeed. I set men and women weeping, I set them working, I set them praising God, I set them praying. You call that silly. I don't; it's the way God made me." She paused a moment, and looked up once more, with that strange air of inspiration

in her big brown eyes. "When I was first studying music," she said, slowly, "I went to Florence, and there in Florence I saw some pictures of Fra Angelico's, who was the holiest man that ever painted. Those pictures made me think; they made me pray. Then I read in a book that Fra Angelico never took brush in hand without falling on his knees and asking for guidance. I thought to myself: 'That's why he could paint like an angel!' Then it occurred to me that I, too, would do the same in my art. You can't fall on your knees on a public platform, but you can pray, and I would pray for guidance. It is all the better for the art itself, for the more you think of the sacredness of your art, the nobler will it be; and it's a thousand times better for your own soul and for the souls of your audiences."

The manager stared at her with a blank stare of surprise. "Well, I suppose I must submit," he said, turning it over slowly. "Though, if you'll excuse me, madame, that may be all very well in its way, but—it isn't business."

Madame's eyes flashed fire. "No, thank God," she answered fervently, for she was a devout woman in her way. "You have hit the truth there. Thank God, it isn't business!"

It was the day before Christmas. Hilda Lovell was walking in a retired part of Kensington Gardens with Percy Emlyn. She had met him by accident, it is true, so far as she was concerned, but he had been loitering about for an hour waiting for her. He knew she often walked back that way from her art-school at Kensington; and this morning he had intercepted her, and told her his secret. Not much of a secret, either, for she had guessed it, and even anticipated it, weeks ago.

"O Hilda," the young man said, as he stepped by her side, all tremulous, after she had whispered her "Yes" to him, "you don't know how happy, how proud, you have made me. Darling, my own home has always been so miserable that I scarcely dared to ask you. I scarcely dared to think you would ever accept me. You know about my poor mother—it is terrible to see her, so lonely, so heart-broken. And it was not my father's fault entirely, either, though he has a violent temper. It was what no one can help—natural incompatibility. They were not the two people best fitted to get on in life together. Each had great virtues, but even their virtues somehow clashed with one another. That made me feel half afraid to ask you.

I wondered whether you might think I was, too, like my father in temper and disposition. But when I remember how you and I were created for one another, it makes me bolder, And when I look at your family—at the happy life your father and mother lead after so many years of marriage—the way they are still lovers together——”

Hilda's heart gave a sudden jump. Something seemed to stab her inwardly. What a false note to touch at such a moment! It broke in upon her dream with a hateful shock of reality. Her father and mother! Like lovers together! Oh, ought she to undeceive him? But no, not now. It would be wrong to herself, it would be unkind to Percy, it would be cruel to her parents; for, whatever their differences, they had, at least, loyally tried, for their children's sakes, to hide them from the world, and had appeared, as Percy said, to outward view like a pair of lovers. She turned the subject off with a nervous little laugh, and a suppressed sigh. “After so many years,” she murmured. “Why ‘after so many years,’ Percy? Surely love is for life, and life is all too short for love. I hope you and I will love one another equally—or more, if that were possible—after years of marriage.”

“You and I—oh, yes, darling—you and I—well, you and I are different. But it must give you great confidence to have lived all your life with a father and mother whose love is never clouded, while it makes me so diffident to feel that every one may suspect me—I hate to say it, but—of being just like my father.”

“No one could think you anything but just and sweet and good, Percy.”

“Thank you, darling. How dear of you to say so! Well, I mustn't go any further with you now. You will tell your people, won't you? Shall I see you this afternoon, as you said, at the Stanleys'?”

“O Percy, I'm so sorry, I didn't know you were going there! And mother accepted some tickets to-day for Signor Metelli's concert this afternoon. You know, Madame de Meza is singing there.”

“That's all right, darling. Then I'll cut the Stanleys and go to the concert, and meet you casually afterward.”

“But you can't get tickets; every one of them is sold. This is her first appearance since she came from Australia, and everybody says she won't sing much longer. She's growing

old, you know, though her voice is lovely still ; so all London is flocking to hear this concert."

"Never mind," Percy answered ; "where there's a will there's a way. I met the De Meza once at my uncle Herbert's. I shall go to her boldly and ask her for a ticket."

"She'll have none ; they're all gone."

"Then I'll ask for standing room."

"I do hope you'll get it !"

"If not, I shall loiter about the door outside, and wait till you come out. Then your people will see me, and ask me to walk back with them."

They said good-bye near the clump of rhododendrons. Hilda went home, flushed and happy. But the moment of her arrival was, to say the least, an unfortunate one.

Three minutes before she arrived Mrs. Lovell had ventured into her husband's study. She did not knock at the door. She entered hastily. Wilfred Lovell was engaged in writing the last paragraphs of his chapter on the Primitive Relations of Etruscan Art to Assyria and Egypt.

"Thus we see," he said aloud, reading over his sentence in a balanced voice to judge of its rhythm, "that the intelligent craftsmen of Cartona and Clusium did not merely accept these imported ideas in a passive manner, but added to them certain original modifications of their own, which entirely—— Shut that door ! Who comes in without knocking?"

"Wilfred, it's me. I've come to ask you——"

"Didn't I particularly say I wished to be left alone to myself this morning? Didn't I specially ask you to take care that the children shouldn't be allowed to disturb me? Yet only five minutes ago that boy Charlie spoilt the ring of a sentence by bursting in without warning, 'to look for his top,' he said ; and now you spoil another by coming to bother me at the precise wrong moment about some domestic matter. Well, what is it this time? Cook given notice, eh? Maria broken something?——original modifications of their own, which entirely alter, and even destroy, the peculiar spirit of the Assyrian artists."

"No, Wilfred ; it's not the cook. This is Christmas Eve, you know——"

"Christmas Eve ! Oh, nonsense ! Why, it's not one o'clock yet ! How can it be eve before the day's half over ? A transparent absurdity ! Well, what do you want me for, just when I want to be quiet?"

"We're just going to boil the puddings, and before we tie them up——"

"Do I manage the pudding department?"

"No; but the children say everybody in the house must come and stir them."

"Come and stir them? Louisa, what a ridiculous superstition!"

The children by this time were peeping timidly round the open door. Mrs. Lovell grew annoyed; they were both hot-tempered. "It's not a superstition!" she answered warmly. "It's just a good, old custom. I wonder a man of letters and an antiquary like you doesn't see the picturesqueness and beauty of our quaint old customs!"

"Quaint old rubbish! It is a superstition, I tell you! Don't I know a vast deal more about these matters than you do? I've studied their origin. This stirring's un-Christian. It's a relic of the old cannibal sacrifice feast, where every member of the family had to bear his part in the slaying and eating of the human victim. Disgusting puerile trash! I won't countenance such nonsense, Louisa. You're old enough, I should think, to be ashamed of yourself!"

Mrs. Lovell made a deprecating face, and dropped her voice low. "Before the children, Wilfred!"

Her husband turned to his writing. "Get out of this study!" he cried petulantly. "I will not have you and your children intruding into my room at all hours of the day! This is intolerable—intolerable—that a man engaged upon a serious life-work should be badgered and bullied by a superstitious woman to stir her plum-puddings, in accordance with a ridiculous and degrading custom, of our naked ancestors! Get out at once, I say! I don't want you or your puddings!"

The children stared at one another open-mouthed and terrified. Such open ebullitions were unfamiliar to them. But Mrs. Lovell by this time was angry in turn. "I will go," she said slowly, with suppressed wrath in her voice, "and—I will not come back again. Wilfred, I can stand your vulgar violence no longer. I have made up my mind; I shall get a separation."

At that precise moment Hilda entered.

"Get a separation, then, by all means," the father answered grimly. "None too soon, I think! I've known for months that was the only way out of it. And now that you've dragged

your children in on purpose to hear openly what they must have guessed long ago, there's no reason for delay. 'For the children's sake,' we always said; but it's better, after all, the children should know we had parted by mutual consent than be admitted to see us quarreling like this. For my part, I'm sick and tired of the whole business. I shall go off to the sea-side—and get leisure at least to finish my Greek and Etruscan Studies."

"Mother dear," Hilda said quietly, taking her mother's arm, "come and let me stir the pudding." For she guessed what had happened. "Father, you'll come, too." She seized his arm also.

Wilfred Lovell hesitated for a second. It was too abrupt a surrender. But Hilda's touch on his arm was soft, and he loved his daughter. "Well, if you wish it, my dear child," he said slowly, climbing down with an ill grace—"though, of course, you are aware it's a degrading superstition."

"Yes, dear, so it is. A relic of barbarism. Come and stir the pudding, and explain to us all you have found out about it."

Lunch was a silent meal. Wilfred Lovell ate savagely, mused, and looked gloomy. His wife pretended to be extremely busy with the children's food. The little ones sat awestruck. Only Hilda tried to keep up some hollow semblance of cheerfulness. But deep in her own heart she was sadder than any of them. She had a sorrow of her own. What a terrible revelation for that trustful Percy!

After lunch she took her mother's arm again with a gentle pressure. "Now, dearest," she said soothingly, "you must go up and get ready."

"Get ready—for what?"

"Why, you know, for Signor Metelli's concert."

"Signor Metelli's concert! I'd forgotten all about it. I can't go to-day. My eyes are too red, Hilda; I'm not fit for it. Your father's cruelty——"

"That's how you speak to my daughter about her father!" Wilfred Lovell interposed, looking up from the Spectator.

"Now, papa, you mustn't! Go to your dressing-room and get ready. You must both of you come with me. Do as I tell you, dear. It's the best thing for all of us."

Wilfred Lovell moved with reluctant steps toward the door.

"Very well," he said gloomily. "It won't be for long, that's one good thing. As soon as this beastly Christmas rubbish is over——"

"We shall all settle down again in our places as usual; yes, dear, I hope so. Now go and put on your nice coat—I won't stir out with you in that horrid old one; and, mother dear, you must wear your gray. It's the right thing for a concert."

With infinite difficulty she got them both off, and induced them to dress. Then she sent for a four-wheeler, and drove with them to the hall. "A pair of lovers," indeed! Her heart sank when she thought how she should ever break the doleful news to Percy. For this time she felt sure they really meant it.

As they were nearing the door Wilfred Lovell broke the silence in which they had all ridden. "I do this to please you, Hilda, my child," he said, looking across at her; "but I want you clearly to understand that the moment this silly Christmas nonsense is finished and cleared away I intend to take your mother's advice and put an end to such scenes by having a separation."

They entered the hall, Hilda trembling. After they had taken their seats, about the middle row, she glanced around the room, on the lookout for Percy. A man would doubtless have failed to find him in so large an audience; but Hilda's quick eyes soon picked him out; he had managed to get a special seat near the platform, no doubt from Madame de Meza. It comforted the poor girl to reflect that, being a man, he would probably fail to perceive the trouble in her face, and the hard look of anger in her father's and mother's. Men don't read these things like women. But the discovery, after all, was merely deferred. Sooner or later, he must know; and then, what a painful beginning for their engagement!

The singers came forward and sang their various pieces. Hilda hardly heard them. Through a veil of mental mist vague sounds of sacred song came wafted across the air to her unheeding ear. She was too full of trouble to notice them. For months she had worn herself out in trying to smooth things down for those two whom she loved so dearly—for she loved them both alike; now the rupture had come, and there seemed no way out of the difficulty made by it.

At last, after three or four performers had been cheered and retired, a hush fell upon the hall—a great hush of expectation. Somebody rustled on to the stage. Madame de Meza swept

forward, tall, queenly, defiant. Hilda raised her eyes, and looked upon the great singer. The woman's handsome face and big eyes somehow arrested her attention even then. She looked so strangely sympathetic. For a moment Madame de Meza paused, as the hall rang with redoubled applause at her appearance. Then she closed the big brown eyes; the rich lips moved silently. She was praying, after her wont—praying with her old-fashioned New England earnestness. When she raised her eyelids again, she gazed round the room as if in search of something. She was seeking her inspiration. After a restless groping her glance lighted for a second on a fair young girl, with a very white face—white, though it had usually a bright patch of color; so much she could gather even then, in spite of its whiteness. Madame gazed at the girl long without opening her lips. The audience grew impatient. Signor Metelli waited and twitched his fingers in mute wonder. The great singer's eye wandered on to either side of the girl, and fell on a man and woman in middle life, whom their daughter seemed to separate. All at once, with a rush, an inspiration came over her. She knew what to sing. She lifted her voice and began to pour forth: "John Anderson, my jo, John."

Signor Metelli's face was a study in horror. Was the creature mad? This was a sacred concert! That wild woman would ruin it.

Madame sang on, unperturbed, like an inspired agent:

"John Anderson, my jo, John,
When we were first acquent
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your brow is bald, John,
Your locks are like the snow;
But——"

She paused, and then burst out afresh:

"——blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson, my jo!"

There was nothing much in the simple words she sang to produce the effect; it was the way she sang them. She threw herself into the very spirit of Burns' touching ditty. Suddenly, half way through, as if by an inner impulse, Mrs. Lovell changed places noiselessly with Hilda, and sat next her hus-

band. Wilfred Lovell said nothing, but his eyes glistened. He turned and looked. It was thirty years since; yet how pretty she was still, when she turned like that to him!

The great singer went on:

“John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And many a canty day, John,
We’ve had wi’ ane anither.
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we’ll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo!”

She sang it with wonderful force and pathos and feeling. Her own heart trembled. All the hall held its breath. Madame had surely surpassed herself! When she ended Signor Metelli gave a sigh, and breathed again. Business indeed! The applause was deafening; time after time it swelled afresh. Hilda let her eyes drop. To her immense surprise, there, unobtrusively under the gray cloak, she saw her mother’s hand locked fast in her father’s!

The rest of that concert was a whirling blank to her. She spent all her time in repressing her happy tears, and silently thanking Madame de Meza.

When all was over the audience rose and left. The hall thinned fast. Four people alone kept their seats—the Lovells and Percy Emlyn.

Mrs. Lovell dried her eyes and turned, half sobbing, to her daughter. “Let us go and tell her,” she said, simply.

Wilfred Lovell rose, too. “Yes, let us go and tell her, dear. I want to ask your forgiveness; I want—to thank her.”

The great singer smiled when they told her. One impulse moved her. She laid hand in hand.

“I saw your daughter’s face,” she said, “and it seemed to put it into me. But I prayed, you know, too, and—this is Christmas time.”

That night Percy Emlyn supped quietly at the Lovells’. More than ever, he felt sure his Hilda’s parents were like two lovers together.

LIFE'S HAZARDS*

BY ALBERT LADVOCAT.



MARCEL DELAMARRE was standing before a mirror gravely engaged in buttoning his collar when his "valet de chambre" presented to him the mail, which the concierge had just brought up.

It is saying too much to call it the mail, however. There was only a letter, a single one, in a black-bordered envelope. Marcel carelessly tore it open and read half aloud:

"You are invited to be present at the funeral services and interment of M. Boudarel, rentier, died Saturday, October 3, Rue de Rivoli, 25, aged 54 years."

"Well, well!" he exclaimed, "poor Boudarel! To think I dined with him not a week ago. He seemed to be perfectly well then. He made his little jokes, told stories—so it goes!"

Looking at his watch, he added:

"The ceremony is at eleven o'clock. I should have just time to get there. But, then, I should be late for breakfast, and that would do my stomach no good. After all, if I should not go to this funeral? I scarcely knew him, Boudarel. I saw him only two or three times a year at the dinners of the 'Tout-à-la-joie,' of which he was a member. To be sure, we almost always found ourselves side by side at the table, and by dessert we were always on the most familiar terms. He was a very good fellow!"

He went to the window and looked out at the day.

"Bu-r-r! it is going to pour. People should not be buried in such weather. Decidedly, I shall not go!" But glancing at the cards again he saw that the services were to take place at the Church of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois.

* Translated by Ada Gilbert Close, from the French, for Short Stories.

"How fortunate!" he exclaimed, "the Church Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois is right near where my nurseryman lives, whose advice I wish to ask about my polonias. If I take a carriage at once I can kill two birds with one stone."

Saying this, he rapidly finished dressing and set out, carrying black gloves.

At the hour when Marcel received the letter in question another person was opening a similar envelope. It was a widow, Mme. Salman, who likewise hesitated about accepting the funeral invitation.

"Boudarel?" she said, questioning her memory, "where have I known that man? Ah, I remember he was an intimate friend of my Uncle Jules. Really, I believe I can spare myself—besides, my black hat is far from fresh. It is true that the ceremony is to be at Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, that would allow me to go to the Louvre to buy some rice powder, and a veil at the same time. I need a new veil dreadfully!"

Marcel and Mme. Salman reached the church at the same time; in fact, they met at the door, and he drew back to let her pass. But she did not go inside. Seeing that she had arrived too early and that the funeral cortège was not yet there, she preferred to wait in the vestibule.

He did likewise, and thus had an opportunity to observe her. He noticed that she was young, and had a very good figure, exceedingly pretty eyes, and soft, blond hair framing a beautiful oval face. She, on her side, perceived without appearing to, that he was a gentleman of probably thirty-five or thirty-six years, that his glance was very penetrating, his teeth very white, and his mustache very fine. In short, he pleased her so much the more because she felt that she also pleased him, and that very much!

He wanted to speak to her. But how and à propos of what? The occasion which he sought presented itself very naturally. The young woman in opening her purse to give two sous to a beggar let her kerchief fall. Quick as lightning Marcel picked it up and handed it to her with a smile, which gained an amiable acknowledgment. Then he felt at liberty to say: ~

"It is surely eleven o'clock, is it not, madame? I believe the carriages are late."

"Yes," she answered, "ten minutes late."

The conversation threatened to stop here, for she had withdrawn a little. He felt that, cost what it might, he must find

something more to say in order not to lose the benefit of the start already made. In this emergency, having nothing better upon his lips, he launched this truly absurd reflection:

"It is sad to die in such weather! I, when I shall go to my last sleep, would wish to have the beautiful sun shining, would you not, madame?"

"Certainly, Monsieur," she replied.

Encouraged by this response, even if it were laconic, and having now found an interesting topic of conversation, he continued:

"Besides, this poor Boudarel has never had a chance! And, moreover, such an excellent man! Did you know him well, madame?"

"No, not well; but I know that he had some great qualities."

"Yes; a heart of gold."

"Ah, I can well believe it—a heart of gold!"

"And to think that he has been so quickly taken away from our affection! For, indeed, nothing could have surprised me more. But, alas! it is always the best who go first!"

At this moment the conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the funeral procession. Every one went into the church, and the services began. But Marcel had taken care to place himself behind the young widow, and he found means of interesting her during the ceremony by some remarks made in a low voice.

After the services were over they came out of the church together, and Marcel asked his charming neighbor:

"You are going to the cemetery, are you not?"

She hesitated a moment, but he continued quickly:

"I am going, too. One cannot do less for this excellent Boudarel. Permit me to assist you."

He called one of the carriages and helped Mme. Salman in. Then he seated himself opposite her. And, in spite of the reserve which the situation imposed, this was a most charming drive.

At first, of course, the conversation was upon sad subjects, then it insensibly wandered to others. They spoke of music, the theatre. A discussion was started about the beauty of some celebrated actresses. Marcel related some anecdotes which he had heard at his club.

In short, when they arrived at the cemetery of Père Lachaise, the young woman, who had been truly entertained the

long drive, found some difficulty in gathering herself together and assuming the proper air of sadness.

But the return was quite another matter. The rain had ceased. The day had suddenly become fine. There was a sweet moisture, and the air was fragrant with all the flowers, which pious hands had laid, here and there, upon the tombs. So Marcel and Mme. Salman walked slowly, like two dreaming lovers, and their conversation had taken a most intimate turn.

It seemed to both of them that they had known each other a long time, and they were surprised to see how their tastes, their sentiments agreed.

When they were about to separate, the young man asked timidly:

"May I venture, madame, to call upon you this winter on your reception day?"

She would have liked to have answered, "Yes," at once, but really she asked herself if it were possible, from the point of conventionality, to authorize a visit so quickly. Fortunately, he had the happy inspiration of adding, in a moved voice:

"In this way we should be able to talk a little of our poor Boudarel!"

It was true. She had not thought of that. Was there not a pious memory between them? Could she refuse him who spoke to her the supreme consolation which the feeling of regrets shared would give? So she answered with much dignity:

"So be it, Monsieur, since you place yourself under the patronage of the friend whom we both mourn, I shall be charmed to receive you on my Tuesdays."

As may be supposed, the following Tuesday, without delaying longer, Marcel presented himself at the home of the young widow. She gravely introduced him to the people already in her salon:

"M. Marcel Delamarre, a friend of that poor Boudarel, who has just been taken away from our affection."

Those present asked no more, as they had some tact, feeling indeed that there was a grief to respect, they discreetly withdrew one after another.

It was the same on the Tuesdays which followed. Consequently Marcel and the young lady had long and agreeable tête-à-têtes, which enabled the to know each other better, and to appreciate each other more and more.

Every one knows the inevitable outcome in such a case.

One day M. Delamarre fell gracefully at the feet of the beautiful widow, and swore to her that he would kill himself in despair if she refused to marry him, to which she replied, with a celestial smile, that nothing in the world would induce her to charge her conscience with such a horrible suicide. And sweet vows were exchanged.

The marriage took place early in the month of December, at the church of the Madeleine.

Marcel beamed with joy when he entered the vestry to receive the congratulations of his friends and relatives.

He could scarcely believe in his own good fortune. How had it all happened? How had it been possible to realize such a beautiful dream? Then he recalled the prologue of this delightful romance, which ended so happily in marriage; in his thoughts he saw himself again two months before in another church, meeting, for the first time, her who was now to be his companion for the rest of his life.

And, very much moved, he could not help directing a grateful thought to the poor dead fellow at whose obsequies he had been present a little by chance, and who had been, in fact, the unconscious author of all this felicity.

Bending toward the ear of his young wife he murmured:

"Ah, how happy poor Boudarel would be if he could see us!"

But at this moment there occurred a phenomenon—strange, unheard-of, fantastic—a phenomenon to make the hair rise on end!

Boudarel, whose name had just been spoken—he was there! He or his shade! He was there in a black suit, and smiling most amiably.

"Boudarel!"

Marcel thought himself the plaything of a frightful nightmare.

The bride uttered a cry and seemed about to faint. But the apparition—if it were one—was certainly not animated with sinister intentions, for they heard a joyous voice saying:

"Yes, it is I, Boudarel. Well, did you not expect to see me? However, I have come, anyway, although I believe you did forget to invite me."

The young man was on the point of answering:

"But how should I have invited you, my dear fellow, when you have been dead and buried for two months?"

Happily his self-possession had returned, and realizing that some strange mistake had happened he said instead, making a great effort to hide his feelings:

"Delighted to see you. We did not know you were in Paris!"

"It is true, I have been away for six weeks. I was busy in settling up the estate of my cousin and godfather, Henri Boudarel—you knew him, I think? He who came to my home to be present during the Czar's visit in Paris, and who died very suddenly from a stroke of apoplexy? They must have sent you an invitation to the funeral. I was not able to go to it. I had sprained my ankle two days before."

Marcel and his wife exchanged a glance of consternation, then they effusively shook the hand of this good friend, who had known how to die and then come to life again at the right moment, exactly like the hero of one of the old melodramas which used to be played at the Théâtre de l'Ambigu.



THE DEATH-MARCH OF KÛLOP SÛMBING*

BY HUGH CLIFFORD

"From age to age a glowing page
Their names must win in story
The men who wrought and dared and fought
To make a nation's glory.
Half men, half gods, they feared no odds,
And made our England's name
Echo and roll from pole to pole,
A widening din of fame!

"But had their ways, for all their days,
Been set in lands apart,
Straitened and pent, with ne'er a vent
For mighty brain and heart,
These very men, perhaps, might then
Have joined the nameless throng,
Who wage red war against the Law,
But win no name in song."
—"The Song of the Lost Heroes."



HE was an ill fellow to look at—so men who knew him tell me—large of limb and very powerfully built. His face was broad and ugly, and a peculiarly sinister expression was imparted to it by a hare-lip, which left his gums exposed. It was to this latter embellishment that he owed at once his vicious temper and the name by which he was known. It is not difficult to understand why, for women did not love to look upon the gash in his lip, and his nickname of Sûmbing—which means "The Chipped One"—reminded him of his calamity whenever he heard it.

* From "Blackwood's Magazine."

He was a native of Pêrak, and he made his way into Pahang through the untrodden Sâkai country. That is practically all that is known concerning his origin. The name of the district in which Kûlop Sûmbing had his home represented nothing to the natives of the Jelai Valley, and now no man knows from what part of Pêrak this adventurer came. The manner of his coming, however, excited the admiration, and impressed itself upon the imaginations of the people of Pahang—who love pluck almost as much as they hate toil; so the tale of his doings is still told, though these things happened nearly a score of years ago.

Kûlop Sûmbing probably held a sufficiently cynical opinion as to the nature of his countrywomen, who are among the most venal of their sex. He knew that no girl could love him for the sake of his marred unsightly face, but that many would if his money-bags were well lined. Therefore he determined to grow rich with as little delay as possible, and to this end he looked about for some one whom he might plunder. For this purpose Pêrak was played out. The law of the white men could not be bribed by a successful robber, so he turned his eyes across the border to Pahang, which bore an evil reputation, as a land in which ill things were done with impunity, while the doer thrived exceedingly.

He had a love of adventure, was absolutely fearless, and was, moreover, a good man with his hands. In common with most Malays the Central Jail, and the rigid discipline of prison life, had few attractions for him; and as he did not share with the majority of his race their instinctive dread of traveling alone in the jungle, he decided on making a lone-hand raid into the Sâkai country, which lies between Pêrak and Pahang. Here he would be safe from the grip of the white man's hand, and well removed from the sight of the government's eyes, as the Malays name our somnolent policemen, and much wealth would come to the ready hand that knew full well how to seize it. He, of course, felt absolutely no twinges of conscience, for you must not look for principle in the men of the race to which Kûlop Sûmbing belonged. A Malay is honest and law-abiding just so long as it suits his convenience to be so, and not more than sixty seconds longer. Virtue in the abstract does not fire him with any particular enthusiasm, but a love of right-doing may occasionally be galvanized into a sort of paralytic life in his breast, if a haunting fear of the

consequences of crime are kept very clearly before his eyes. So Kûlop kicked the dust of law-restrained Pêrak from his bare brown soles, and set out for the Sâkai country, and the remote interior of Pahang, where the law of God was not and no law of man held true.

He carried with him all the rice that he could bear upon his shoulders, two dollars in silver, a little tobacco, a handsome "kris," and a long spear, with a broad and shining blade. His supplies were to last him till the first Sâkai camps were reached, and after that his food, he told himself, would "rest at the tip of his dagger." He did not propose to really begin his operations until the mountains, which fence the Pêrak boundary, had been crossed, so was content to allow the first Sâkai villages to pass unpillaged. He impressed some of the naked, frightened aborigines as bearers, he levied such supplies of food as he needed, and the Sâkai, who were glad to be rid of him so cheaply, handed him on from village to village with the greatest alacrity. The base of the jungle-covered mountains of the interior were reached at the end of a fortnight, and Kûlop and his Sâkai began to drag themselves up the steep ascent by means of roots, trailing creepers, and slender saplings.

Upon a certain day they reached the summit of a nameless mountain and threw themselves down, panting for breath upon the round bare drumming-ground of an argus pheasant. On the crest of almost every hill and hog's back in the interior these drumming-grounds are found, bare and smooth as a threshing-floor, save for the thin litter of dead twigs with which they are strewn by the birds. Sometimes, if you keep very still, you may hear the cocks strutting and dancing, and thumping the hard earth, but no man among us has ever seen the pheasants going through their performance. At night time their full-throated yell rings across the valleys, waking a thousand echoes, and the cry is taken up and thrown backwards and forwards by a host of pheasants, each answering from his own hill. Judging by the frequency of their cry, they must be among the most common of all jungle birds, yet so deftly do they hide themselves that they are but rarely seen, and the beauties of their plumage—at once more delicate and more brilliant than that of the peacock—and the wonders of the countless violet eyes with which their feathers are set, are only known to us because these birds are so frequently trapped by the Malays.

Where Kûlop and his Sâkai lay the trees were thinned out. The last two hundred feet of the ascent had been a severe climb, and the ridge, which formed the summit, stood clear of the treetops which grew half-way up the slope. As he lay panting, Kûlop Sûmbing gazed down for the first time upon the eastern slope of the Peninsula, the theatre in which ere long he proposed to play a very daring part. At his feet were treetops of every shade of green, from the tender, brilliant color which we associate with young corn, to the deep dull hue which is almost black. They fell nearly beneath him in a broad slope of living vegetation, the contour of each individual tree, and the gray, white, or black lines, which marked their trunks covering the plain was a blurred wash of color that had more of blue than green in it. Here and there, very far away, the sunlight fell in a dazzling flash upon something which glistened like the mirror of a heliograph, and this, Kûlop knew, was the broad reaches of a river. The jungle hid all traces of human habitation, and no sign of life was visible, save only a solitary kite "sailing with supreme dominion through the azure depth of air," and the slight uneasy swaying of some of the taller trees, as a faint breeze swept gently over the forest. Here, in the mountains, the air was damp and chilly, and a cold wind was blowing, while the sun appeared to have lost half its power. In the plain below, however, the land lay steaming and sweltering beneath the fierce perpendicular rays, while the heat-haze danced restlessly above the forest.

During the next day or two Kûlop Sûmbing and his Pêrak Sâkai made their way down the eastern slope of the mountains, and through the silent forests, which are given over to game, and to the equally wild jungle-folk, who fly at the approach of any human beings, precisely as do the beasts which share with them their home.

Kûlop and his people passed several deserted camps belonging to these wild Sâkai, but the instinct of the savages tells them unerringly that strangers are at hand, and never once were any of these folk caught sight of by the travelers.

These people live a nomadic life, roaming hither and thither through the forest in quest of fresh feeding-grounds when the old ones are temporarily exhausted. They have no knowledge of planting, and they live chiefly upon yams and roots, sour jungle fruits, and the fish which they catch in cunningly devised basket-work traps. These things are known to such of

us as have journeyed through their country, for their tracks tell their story up to this point. We know, too, that they camp in rude shelters of leaves propped crazily on untrimmed up-rights, and that they obtain wood knives from the tamer tribesmen in exchange for the long reeds of which the inner casing of the Sâkai blow-pipes is made. But even when they barter thus, they never willingly meet other human beings, their wares being deposited in certain well-known places in the jungle, where they are replaced by other articles which the wild folk remove when no man is watching. A few survivors of the captives, made by the tamer Sâkai on various slave-raiding expeditions, may be found in some of the Malay villages in Pahang, but of the life of these people in their wild forest state no man knows anything.

Kûlop Sûmbing, of course, took very little interest in them, for they possess no property, and nothing was therefore to be gained by harrying them. So he pushed on through the wild Sâkai country until the upper waters of the Betok, the principal tributary of the Jelai, was reached.

Bamboos were felled, a raft was constructed; and then Kûlop Sûmbing dismissed his Sâkai, and began his descent of the unknown river, which led he knew not where, alone, save for his weapons, but full of confidence in his ability to pillage this undiscovered country single-handed.

When you come to think of it, there was something bordering upon the heroic in the action of this unscrupulous man with the marred face, who glided gently down the river on this wild, lone-hand raid. The land was strange to him; the river, for all he knew, might be beset with impassable rapids and unknown dangers of every kind; his object was robbery on a large scale, and a plunderer is not likely to meet with much love from those whom he despoils. He was going to certain enmity, one might say to almost certain death, yet he poled his raft down the stream with deft punts, and gazed calmly ahead of him with a complete absence of fear.

Under happier circumstances Kûlop of the Hare-lip might surely have won rank among those brave men whose names still ring through the centuries as heroes, whose courage has won for them a lasting niche in human history.

It was at noon upon the second day that Kûlop sighted a large camp of the tamer Sâkai in a clearing on the right bank of the Betok. The sight of a Malay coming from such an un-

usual quarter filled the jungle people with superstitious dread, and in a few minutes every man, woman and child had fled screaming to the forest.

Kûlop went through the ten or fifteen squalid huts which stood in the clearing, and an occasional grunt attested that he was well satisfied with the stores of valuable "getah" lying stowed away in the sheds. He calculated that there could not be less than seven "pikul," and that would mean \$600 in cash—a small fortune for any Malay. But then a difficulty presented itself. How was this precious sum to be carried down stream into Pahang? His raft would hold about one "pikul"—he knew that the Sâkai would not interfere with him if he chose to remove that amount and to leave the rest. But the sight of the remaining six "pikul" was too much for him. He could not find it in his heart to abandon it, and he began to feel angry with the Sâkai, who, he almost persuaded himself, were defrauding him of his just rights.

He rolled his quid of betel-nut and sat down to await the return of the Sâkai, and as he thought of the injury they were like to do him if they refused to aid in the removal of the rest of the "getah," his heart waxed very hot within him.

Presently two frightened brown faces, scarred with blue tattoo-marks on cheeks and forehead, and surmounted by a frowzy mop of sun-bleached hair, rose stealthily above the level of the flooring near the door, and peeped at him with shy, terrified eyes.

Kûlop turned his face toward them, and the bobbing heads disappeared with surprising alacrity.

"Come hither!" cried Kûlop.

The heads reappeared once more, and in a few brief words Kûlop bade them go call their fellows.

The Sâkai sidled off into the jungle, and presently a crowd of squalid aborigines came from out the shelter of the trees and underwood and stood looking at Kûlop curiously, with light feet gingerly treading the ground, every muscle braced for a swift dart into cover at the first alarm of danger.

"Who among ye is the chief?" asked Kûlop.

"Thy servant is the chief," replied an aged Sâkai.

He stood forward as he spoke, trembling a little as he glanced timidly at the Malay, who sat cross-legged in the doorway of the hut. A straggling mop of hair was almost white, and his skin was dry and creased and wrinkled. He was

naked, as were all his people, save for a slender loin-clout of bark-cloth, and his thin flanks and buttocks were white with the warm woodashes in which he had been lying when Kùlop's arrival interrupted his mid-day snooze.

"Bid these, thy children, build me eight bamboo rafts, strong and firm, at the foot of yonder rapid," said Kùlop "And mark ye, be not slow, for I love not indolence."

"It can be done," said the Sâkai headman, submissively.

"That is well," returned Kùlop. "See thou to it with speed, for I am a man prone to wrath."

The Sâkai fell to work, and by nightfall the eight new rafts were completed, and while the jungle-folk toiled, Kùlop of the Hare-lip, who had declared that he loved not indolence, lay upon his back on the floor of the chief's hut, and roared a love-song in a harsh, discordant voice, to the lady whose heart the wealth he sought so eagerly, and now began to see within his grasp, would enable him to subdue.

Kùlop slept that night in the Sâkai hut among the restless jungle-folk. The air was chilly up here in the foothills, and the fire, which the Sâkai never willingly let die, smoked and smouldered in the middle of the floor. Half a dozen long logs, all pointing to a common centre like the spokes of a broken wheel, met at the point where the fire burned red in the darkness, and between these boughs in the warm gray ashes lay men, women and children sprawling in every conceivable attitude into which their naked brown limbs could twist themselves. Ever and anon they would rise up and tend the fire. Then they would sit round the newly-kindled blaze and talk in the jerky monosyllable jargon of the aborigines. The pungent smoke of the wood enshrouded them as with a garment, and their eyes waxed red and watery, but they heeded it not, for as their old saw has it, "Fire-smoke is the blanket of the Sâkai."

And Kùlop of the Hare-lip slept the sleep of the just.

The dawn broke grayly, for a mist hung low over the forest, white as driven snow and cold and clammy as the forehead of a corpse. The naked Sâkai peeped shiveringly from the doorways of their huts, and then went shuddering back to the grateful warmth of the fire, and the frowzy atmosphere within.

Kùlop alone made his way down to the river-bank, and there performed his morning ablutions with scrupulous care—for whatever laws of God and man a Malay may disregard, he never forgets the virtue of personal cleanliness, which, in an

Oriental, is even more immediately important to his neighbors than all the godliness in the world. A Malay would as soon think of foregoing his morning tub as he would of fasting when food was to be had in plenty, and the days of Ramathân had sped.

When his ablutions were completed, Kûlop climbed the steep bank once more, and, standing outside the chief's hut, called the Sâkai from their lairs, bidding them hearken to his words. They stood or squatted before him in the white mist, through which the sun, just peeping above the jungle, was beginning to send long slanting rays of dazzling white light.

They were cold and miserable—this little crowd of naked men—and they shivered and scratched their bodies restlessly. The trilling of the thrushes and the chorus raised by other birds came to their ears through the still air mingled with the whooping and barking of the anthropoid apes; but the morning song has small power to cheer those who, like the Sâkai, are very sensitive to cold, and it is during the chilly waking hour that men's courage and vitality are usually at the lowest ebb.

"Listen to me, ye Sâkai!" began Kûlop, in a loud and angry voice, and at the word those of his hearers who stood erect squatted humbly with their fellows, and the shivering of cold was increased by the trembling of fear. If there is one thing the jungle-folk dislike more than another it is to be called "Sâkai" to their faces, and the term is never used to them by the Malays unless the speaker wishes to bully them. The word really means a slave, but by the aborigines it is regarded as the most offensive epithet in the Malay vocabulary. In their own tongue they speak of themselves as "Sen-oi," which means a "man," as opposed to "Gob," a foreigner—for even the Sâkai has some vestiges of pride if you know where to look for it, and to his mind the people of his race are alone entitled to be called "men." When speaking Malay they allude to themselves as "Orang Bûkit"—men of the hills; "Orang Utan"—jungle-folk; or "Oran Dalam"—the folk who dwell within the forests. They delight to be spoken of as "räayat"—peasants, or as "räayat râja"—subjects of the king; and the Malays, who delight in nicely graded distinctions of speech in speaking to men of various ranks and classes, habitually use these terms when addressing Sâkai, in order that the hearts of the jungle folk may be warmed within them. When, there-

fore, the objectionable name "Sâkai" is used to the forest-dwellers, the latter know that mischief and trouble are afoot, and since they are as timid as other wild creatures, a deadly fear falls upon them at the word.

"Listen, ye accursed Sâkai!" cried Kûlop of the Hare-lip, waving his spear above his head. "Mark well my words, for I hear the warm earth calling to the coffin planks in which your carcasses shall be presently if ye fail to do my behests. Go gather up the 'getah' that lies within your dwellings and bring it hither speedily, lest a worse thing befall ye!"

The Sâkai rose slowly and walked each man to his hut with lagging steps. In a few minutes the great round balls of gum, with a little hole punched in each, through which a rotten line was passed, lay heaped upon the ground at Kûlop's feet. But the Sâkai had brought something as well as the "getah," for each man held a long and slender spear fashioned of bamboo. The weapon sounds harmless enough, but these wooden blades are strong and stubborn, and the edges and points are sharper than steel. Kûlop of the Hare-lip saw that the time had come for prompt action to supplement rough words.

"Cast down your spears to the earth, ye swine of the forest!" he yelled.

Almost all the Sâkai did as Kûlop bade them, for the Malay is here the dominant race, and years of oppression and wrong have made the jungle-folk very docile in the presence of the more civilized brown man. The Sâkai chief, however, clutched his weapon firmly, and his frightened old eyes gazed around the group of his kinsmen, vainly inciting them to follow his example. The next moment his gaze was recalled to Kûlop of the Hare-lip by a sharp pain in his right shoulder, as the spear of the Malay transfixed it. His own weapon dropped from his powerless arm, and the Sâkai broke and fled. But a shrill cry from Kûlop, as he ran around them, herding them as a collie herds sheep, brought them soon to a standstill.

No thought of further resistance remained in their minds, and the "getah" was quickly loaded on the rafts, and the plundered Sâkai, still wild with fear, began to pole them down the river, while Kûlop sat at ease on the last raft, which two of the shuddering jungle-folk punted carefully.

The wounded chief, left behind in his hut, sent two youths through the forest to bid their fellow-tribesmen prepare the poison for their blow-pipe darts, since he knew that no one

would now attempt to kill Kûlop of the Hare-lip at close quarters. But the poison which the Sâkai distil from the resin of the "ipoh" tree requires some time to prepare, and if it is to be used with effect upon a human being, a specially strong solution is necessary. Above all, if it is to do its work properly, it must be newly made. Thus it was that Kûlop of the Hare-lip had time to load his rafts with "getah" taken from two other Sâkai camps, and to pass very nearly out of the Sâkai country before the people whom he had robbed were in a position to take the offensive.

The Betok River falls into the Upper Jelai, a stream which is also given over entirely to the jungle-people, and it is not until the latter river meets the Telom and the Serau at the point where the Lower Jelai is formed that the banks begin to be studded with scattered Malay villages.

Kûlop of the Hare-lip knew nothing of the geography of the land through which he was traveling, but he was aware that running water presupposed the existence of the habitations of men of his own race if followed down sufficiently far. Therefore he pressed forward eagerly, bullying and goading his frightened Sâkai into something resembling energy. He had now more than a thousand dollars' worth of "getah" on his rafts, and he was getting anxious as to its safety. To the danger in which he himself went he was perfectly callous and indifferent.

It was at Kuâla Merbau, a spot where a tiny stream falls into the Upper Jelai upon its right bank, that a small party of Sâkai lay in hiding, peering through the greenery at the gliding waters down which Kûlop and his plunder must presently come. Each man carried at his side a quiver fashioned of a single length of bamboo covered with the dots, crosses, and zigzags and triangles which the Sâkai delight to trace upon all their vessels. Each quiver was filled with slender darts, about the thickness of a steel knitting-needle, with an elliptical piece of light wood at one end to steady it in its flight, and a very sharp tip coated with the black venom of the "ipoh" sap. In their hands each one of them held a long reed blow-pipe some twelve feet in length. These weapons were rudely but curiously carved.

Presently the foremost of the Sâkai stood erect, his elbows level with his ears, his feet heel to heel, his body leaning slightly forward from the hips. His hands were locked

together at the mouthpiece of his blowpipe, the long reed being held firmly by his thumbs and forefingers, which were coiled above it, while the weight rested upon the lower interlaced fingers of both hands. His mouth was puckered and drawn in, like that of a man who seeks to spit out a shred of tobacco which the loose end of a cigarette has left between his lips, and it nestled closely to the wooden mouthpiece. His keen, wild eyes glanced along the length of the blowpipe shrewdly and unflinchingly, little hard puckers forming at their corners. Pit! said the blowpipe. The little wad of dry pith which had been used to exclude the air around the dart-head fell into the water a dozen feet away, and the dart itself flew forward with incredible speed, straight to the mark at which it was aimed.

A slight shock on his right side just above the hip apprised Kûlop that something had struck him, and looking down he saw the dart still shuddering in his side. But, as luck would have it, Kûlop carried under his coat a gaudy bag stuffed with the ingredients of the betel quid, and the dart had struck this and embedded itself in it. The merest fraction of a second was all that Kûlop needed to see this, and to take in the whole of the situation, and with him action and perception kept pace with one another. Before the dart had ceased to quiver, before the Sâkai on the bank had had time to send another in its wake, before the men who poled his raft had fully grasped what was going forward, Kûlop had seized the nearest of his Sâkai by his frowzy halo of elf-locks and had drawn him screaming across his knee. The terrified creature writhed and flung his body about wildly, and his friends upon the bank feared to blow their darts lest they should inadvertently wound their kinsman while striving to kill the Malay.

"Have a care, ye swine of the forest!" cried Kûlop, while he cuffed the screaming Sâkai unsparingly in order to keep his limbs in constant motion. "Have a care, ye sons of fallen women! If ye fire one more of your darts this man, your kinsman, dies by my 'kris!'"

The Sâkai on the banks had no reason to doubt the sincerity of Kûlop's words, and since they love their relatives, both near and distant, far more than is possible in more civilized communities, they drew off, and Kûlop of the Hare-lip went upon his way rejoicing. But he kept his Sâkai across his knee none the less, and occasionally administered a sound-ing cuff to him "pour encourager les autres."

Thus he won his way out of the Sâkai country, and that night he laid him down to sleep in a Malay village in the full enjoyment of excellent health, the knowledge that he was at last a rich man, and a delightful consciousness of having successfully performed deeds well worth the doing.

For a month or twain he dwelt in the Jelai, at Bûkit Betong, the village of To' Râja, the great up-country chief, who then ruled that district. He sold his "getah" to this man, and since he was ready to let it go for something less than the market price, the sorrows of the Sâkai were the cause of much amusement to those from whom they sought redress, and whose duty it should have been to afford them protection.

But Kûlop of the Hare-lip had left his heart behind him in Pêrak, for the natives of that State can never long be happy when beyond the limits of their own country, and must always make their way back sooner or later to drink of the waters of their silver river. Perhaps, too, Kûlop had some one particular lady in his mind when he set out upon his quest for wealth, for if you watch, you will see that the best work and the most blackguardly deeds of a man are alike usually due to the woman who sits at the back of his heart and is the driving power which impels him to good or to evil.

One day Kûlop of the Hare-lip presented himself before To' Râja as the latter lay smoking his opium-pipe upon the soft mats in his house, and informed him that as he was about to leave Pahang he had brought a present "trifling and unworthy of his acceptance"—which he craved the chief to honor him by receiving.

"When dost thou go down stream?" asked To' Râja, for the Jelai is in the far interior of Pahang, and if a man would leave the country by any of the ordinary routes, he must pass down that river at any rate as far as Kuâla Lipis.

"Thy servant goes up stream," said Kûlop of the Hare-lip. To' Râja started.

"What?" said he, in a voice full of astonishment.

"Thy servant returns the way he came," said Kûlop, calmly.

To' Râja burst out into a torrent of excited expostulation. It was death, certain death, he said for Kûlop once more to attempt to traverse the Sâkai country. The other ways were open, and no man would dream of staying him if he sought to return to his own country by land or sea. It was folly, it was madness, it was impossible. But to all these words Kûlop

of the Hare-lip turned a deaf ear. He knew Malay chieftains and all their ways and works sufficiently well, and he had paid toll enough to To' Râja already to have any desire to further diminish the amount of his honest earnings. If he wended his way homeward through inhabited country, he knew that he would have to comply with the exactions of every chief through whose district he might pass, and this was a prospect that had few attractions for him. The Sâkai, on the other hand, he despised utterly, and as he was physically incapable of feeling fear at this stage of the proceedings, he laughed at To' Râja's estimate of the risk he would run. Nay, he saw in the chief's words a cunning attempt to induce him to penetrate more deeply into a land in which he might be plundered with the greater ease. Accordingly he declined to be persuaded by To' Râja, and a day or two later he began his return journey through the forests.

He knew that it would be useless to attempt to induce any one to accompany him, so he went, as he had come—alone. The dollars for which he had exchanged his plunder were hard and heavy upon his back, and he was further loaded with rice and dried fish, but his weapons were as bright as ever, and to him they still seemed to be all the companions that a man need desire. He traveled on foot, for he could not pole a raft single-handed against the current, and he had to trust to such paths as he could find, guiding himself for the most part by the direction of the river. He passed many Sâkai camps, which were all abandoned at his approach, and he halted in several of them to replenish his scanty stock of provisions, but he slept in the jungle.

It was on the evening of the second or third night that Kûloṣ became aware of an unpleasant sensation. The moon was at the full, and he could see for many yards around him in the forest, and though no one was visible, he became painfully conscious that somebody was watching him. Occasionally he thought that he caught the glint of eyes in the under-wood, and every now and again a dry twig snapped crisply now to the right, now to the left, now in front of him, now behind him. He started to his feet and sounded the "sôrak"—the war-yell—that pealed in widening echoes through the forest. A rustle in half a dozen directions at once showed him that the watchers had been numerous, and that they were now taking refuge in flight.

Kûlop of the Hare-lip sat down again beside his fire, and a new and strange sensation began to grip his heart queerly. It was accompanied by an uneasy feeling in the small of his back, as though he momentarily expected to receive a spear-thrust there, and a clammy dampness rose upon his forehead, while of a sudden the skin behind his ears seemed strangely cold. Perhaps even Kûlop of the Hare-lip needed no man to tell him that this was fear.

He replenished his fire and sat near it, trying to still the chattering of his teeth. If he could find himself face to face with an enemy fear would leave him, he knew; but this eerie, uncanny feeling of being watched and hounded by foes whom he could not see struck him with palsy. As he sat he glanced uneasily over his shoulder from time to time, and at last he drew back against the trunk of a large tree, so that none might strike him from behind. As he sat thus, leaning slightly backward, he chanced to glance up, and in the tree-top, some fifty yards away, he saw the crouching form à Sâkai silhouetted blackly against the moon-lit sky.

He leaped to his feet once more, and again the "sôrak" rang out as he strove to tear his way through the underwood to the foot of the tree in which he had seen his enemy. But the jungle was thick, he lost his bearings quickly, and, weary with his exertions, torn with brambles, and sweating profusely, he was glad to make his way back to the fire again.

All through that terrible night Kûlop of the Hare-lip strove to drive away sleep from his heavy eyes. The hours seemed incredibly long, and he feared that the dawn would never, never come. One minute he would tell himself that he was wide awake, and a second later a rustle in the underwood startled him into a knowledge that he had slept. Horror and fear had their will of him, and those who know them are aware that there are no more skilled tormentors than they. A hundred times he leaped to his feet and sent the "sôrak" ringing through the jungle, and each time those who watched him fled in panic. While he remained awake and on guard the Sâkai feared him too much to attack him. His previous escape from the dart which they had seen pierce his side had originated in their minds the idea that he was invulnerable, so they tried no longer to slay him from a distance. This he quickly perceived, but fear clutched him once more when he speculated as to what would happen when he was at last forced to give way to

the weight of weariness that was now oppressing him so sorely.

Presently a change began to creep over the forest in which he sat. A little stir in the trees overhead told him that the birds were awakening. Objects, which had hitherto been dark and shapeless masses in the shadows cast into prominence by the white moonlight, gradually assumed more definite shape. Later the colors of the trunks and leaves and creepers, still dark and dulled, but none the less color, began to be perceptible, and Kûlop of the Hare-lip rejoiced exceedingly in that the dawn had come and the horrors of the night were passing away.

All that day Kûlop, albeit weary almost to death, trudged onward through the forest; but the news had spread among the Sâkai that their enemy was once more among them, and the number of the jungle-folk, who dogged his footsteps, steadily increased. Kûlop could hear their shrill whoops, as they called to one another through the forest, giving warning of his approach, or signaling the path which he was taking. Once or twice he fancied that he caught a glimpse of a little brown form, of two glinting eyes, or of a straggling mop of frowzy hair, and then he would charge, shouting angrily. But the figure—if indeed it had any existence save in his over-wrought imagination—always vanished as suddenly and as noiselessly as a shadow long before he could come within striking distance. Kûlop of the Hare-lip found this far more terrible and frightening than the most desperate hand-to-hand fight could be, for the invisibility and the intangible nature of his enemy added the horrors of a fever-dream to the very real danger in which he now knew himself to stand.

The night that followed that day was one of acute agony to the weary man who dared not sleep, and about midnight he again marched forward through the forest, hoping thereby to elude his pursuers.

For an hour he believed himself to have been successful. Then the shrill yells broke out again, and at the sound Kûlop's heart sank within him. Still he stumbled on, too dead tired to charge at his phantom enemy, too hoarse at last even to raise his voice in the "sôrak," but doggedly determined not to give in. But as he waxed faint the number and the boldness of his pursuers increased proportionately, till their yells sounded on every side, and Kûlop seemed like a lost soul, winding his way

to the Bottomless Pit, with an escort of rejoicing devils shouting a noisy chorus around him.

Another awful day followed, and when once more the night shut down, Kûlop of the Hare-lip sank exhausted upon the ground. His battle was over. He could bear up no longer against the weight of his weariness and the aching longing for sleep. Almost as his head touched the warm, dark litter of dead leaves with which the earth of the jungle is strewn, his heavy eyelids closed and his breath came soft and regular. This was his surrender, for at last he knew himself to be beaten. He was half-way up the mountain now, and was almost in reach of safety, but

"Ah, the little more—and how much it is,
And the little less—and what worlds away!"

Kûlop of the Hare-lip—Kûlop the resolute, the fearless—Kûlop the strong, the enduring, was at the end of his tether. He had been beaten—not by the Sâkai, but by Nature, which no man may long defy—and in obedience to her he surrendered his will and slept.

Presently the underwood was parted by human hands in half a dozen different places, and the Sâkai crept stealthily out of the jungle into the little patch of open in which their enemy lay at rest. He moved uneasily in his sleep—not because any noise on their part had disturbed him, for they came as silently as a shadow cast over a broad forest by a patch of scudding cloud—and at the sight the Sâkai halted with lifted foot, ready to plunge back into cover should their enemy awake. But the exhausted man was sleeping heavily, wrapped in the slumber from which he was never again to be aroused. The silent jungle people, armed with heavy clubs and bamboo spears, stole to within a foot or two of the unconscious Malay. Then nearly a score of them lifted their weapons, poised them on high, and brought them down simultaneously on the body of their foe. Kûlop's limbs stretched themselves slowly and stiffly, his jaw fell, and blood flowed in twenty places. No cry escaped him, and the trembling Sâkai looked down upon the dead face of their enemy, and knew that he had paid his debt to them in full.

They touched none of his gear, for they feared to be haunted by his ghost, and Kûlop had nothing edible about him, such as the jungle-folk find it hard to leave untouched.

Money had no meaning to the Sâkai, so the silver dollars, which ran in a glistening stream from a rent made in the bag by a spear-thrust, were left glistening in the moonlight by the side of that still gray face, with the ghastly, pallid lip split upward to the nostrils. There the Sâkai took their leave of Kûlop of the Hare-lip as he lay stretched beside the riches which he had bought at so dear a price.

If you want some ready money and a good "kris" and spear, both of which have done execution in their day, they are all to be had for the gathering in a spot in the forest not very far from the boundary between Pahang and Pêrak, but you must find the place for yourself, since the Sâkai to a man will certainly deny all knowledge of it. Therefore it is probable that Kûlop of the Hare-lip will rise up on the Judgment Day with his property intact.



THE DEVIL AND THE HOLY WATER* AND THE OLD-WOMAN MILL.

BY RICHARD VON VOLKMAN



E all know that the Devil is sometimes unlucky. Indeed it happens often. Is not that the reason we use the words "poor devil" when we see a friend suffering with toothache or listen to the weebegone story of a fellow-man whose best girl has just jilted him?

It happened one day, as the Devil was sniffing about in the cathedral at Cologne, hoping to lay hold of a little fat monk, or an old devotee, that he stumbled and fell—splash!—into the holy water font. Mercy! what grimaces he made, how he sputtered and snorted and sprang to get out again. And once out how he shook himself! He was afraid some of the pious people had seen his fall and would make sport of him, so he hurried slyly from the cathedral.

It was just about Christmas time when this happened, and his teeth chattered with cold as he stood on the sidewalk outside the door. He was at a loss what to do next.

"I don't dare go home to Hell looking as I do now," he thought. "Grandmother would give me a sound scolding. I guess I'll go down to India for a few hours and get dried off."

When at night he made his way to his home in Hell his clothes were dry and he felt relieved and happy once more.

He opened the door of the room where his grandmother was sitting, but had scarcely crossed the threshold when the old woman sprang forward. Her countenance became blue, then changed to sulphur yellow, and she cried:

* Folk Stories translated by A. F. Francis, from the German, for Short Stories.

"What is it I smell, and how you look, you knave! Can it be that you have been prowling about in the churches again?"

The Devil stammered out the story of his mishap.

"Take off your coat," she demanded in her usual imperious fashion, "and go right to bed."

The Devil did not dare disobey. He crept humbly into bed, and feeling thoroughly ashamed of himself, drew up the clothes till only a little tuft of hair on top of his head could be seen.

The grandmother took a corner of the coat between her thumb and forefinger, just as a cook would take a dead mouse by the tail.

"Bu-r-r!" she said, shaking it in disgust. "How it looks!"

Then she went to the gutter which carries all the slush and waste water out of Hell, dipped the coat into it, waited till it was soaked through, washed it thoroughly, and after rinsing it, hung it over the back of a chair before the fire.

When it was dry and the Devil was starting to get out of bed and dress, she picked up the coat and smelled of it again.

"Goodness me!" she said with a sneeze. "How hard it is to get rid of such a church smell!"

With that she hurried from the room and came back bringing a pan filled with chopped dog's hair and powdered horse-hoofs. She threw several handfuls of this mixture on the coat and when it was well scented handed it to the Devil.

"There," she said, with a sigh of relief, "the coat is clean at last, and you will be fit to appear once more in respectable company. But I insist on this visit not being repeated. Do you understand?"

THE OLD-WOMAN MILL.

NEAR Apolda, in the Thuringian Forest, is an old-woman mill. It looks very much like a great coffee mill, but is turned from underneath instead of above. Into the top are put the old women, wrinkled and bent with age, some without teeth and some without hair, and after they have been ground they step out fresh and young again.

It is all done with one turn of the wheel. Crack, crunch it goes through bones and flesh. Still those who have passed through the mill insist that the sensation is far from disagreeable.

"Nay, it is truly pleasant," they say. "It is quite like waking up bright and early in the morning, after a good night's rest, to find the sun creeping into the room, the birds singing outside and the trees whispering in the breeze. It is natural then to turn in bed and stretch out the limbs. That, too, makes the joints crack."

Well, there lived at one time an old woman who had heard of this mill, and, longing to be young once more, she determined to go to Apolda. The way was long, and being feeble she was obliged to stop frequently and rest, but in time she came to her journey's end.

As she approached the mill she noticed a man sitting on a bench, near the door, with his hands in his pockets, watching the little clouds of smoke, which curled from his pipe into the air.

With a sigh of relief she turned toward him, saying:

"I wish to be ground, if you please, sir, and to become young and handsome again."

The man arose, yawned, took his pipe from his mouth and said:

"Well, what is your name?"

"I am called Mother Chapin."

"Sit down a minute here on the bench, Mother Chapin," said the man. Then he went into the mill, opened a huge book and came out with a long strip of paper in his hand.

"Is that the bill?" she asked.

"Good gracious, no," returned the man. "The grinding doesn't cost anything, but first of all you must sign your name to this paper."

"Sign my name," the old woman repeated excitedly. "You probably want me to transfer my soul to the devil. No, I'll do nothing of the kind. I am a righteous woman, and expect to go to heaven when I die."

"It's not as bad as you think," said the man, laughing. "There is nothing on this paper but a list of all the follies which you have committed during your lifetime, and they are all arranged in their order with the day and hour. Before you can be ground, you must swear that when your youth is restored you will commit every one of these foolish deeds again, in exactly the same order that they are here recorded."

Then he examined the list and said with a smirk:

"Surely a good many, Mother Chapin, a good many. Be-

tween your sixteenth and your twenty-sixth year there is one down for every weekday and two for every Sunday. After that it is better. But, let's see, when you began your forties there were more again! Well, it's about like all the rest!"

With a sigh the old woman exclaimed:

"But, sir, then it's not worth the trouble to be ground!"

"It is true—true," he replied. "It is not worth while for many people! That is why we have such an easy life of it; seven holidays every week. The mill is seldom used. It has been still now for many years. Business used to be brisker."

"Wouldn't it be possible just to scratch a few from the list?" the old lady asked after a pause, and looked longingly at the man. "Just three, sir, then, if it is necessary, I'll promise all the rest."

"No," answered the man, "that is absolutely impossible. It must be all or none!"

"You can keep the list," said the old woman after a little reflection. "I've lost all interest in your stupid old mill."

Then she rose wearily and took the road leading homeward.

When she reached the little village where she lived, the people flocked about her in surprise and said:

"Why, Mother Chapin, you look as old now as when you went away. Is anything the matter with the mill?"

She coughed, hesitated a moment, then replied:

"Well, perhaps so. I was too afraid and dared not venture. Besides, what would one gain by a few years more of this life? Heaven forbid!"





BY FRANCIS SCOTT

PARIS lay all below him, a sea of housetops, and a breeze rushed over it like a fresh breeze from the sea. He filled his lungs with it, and felt a sensation thrill him that he had never known before in his dull life.

It was divine, this Paris! Who could ever conceive of it among the simple towns of Brittany? He felt helpless, powerless to take it all in, and realized with a certain instinct the effect it had on him without being able to understand it; he only understood, with a sort of despair, how different he would have been, how different everything would have been, if he had always had impressions poured into his brain in such bewildering floods as during the past months. And the greatest of all experiences had come to him only a short month before. It was Sunday, and he had wandered far from his lodgings into a charming park, where great trees and tropical plants made a dense shade on the velvety grass. He was lounging on a bench, gazing dreamily at the little island in the lake, and wishing that he knew the history of the broken fragments of columns that had evidently at one time formed an arcade around the water's edge. There were few passers-by just then, but presently he became conscious that some one had stopped near him and was regarding him. She was a beautiful girl, and she was looking amusedly at him half over

* Written for Short Stories. Illustrations by William A. Mackay.

her shoulder, and as he turned in his slow way regarding her with an admiration too involuntary to be rude, she gave a low charming laugh, and looking at him one instant more, at last walked slowly away. The young Breton continued to gaze after her, stupidly, one might have thought; but there was that in his face that redeemed it from the dullness of the uneducated peasant. He had flushed a deep crimson. Was this creature a part of the strange world that charmed and yet awed him, only entertained by something in his appearance—was she laughing at him? He pushed his curling hair back impatiently from his forehead, and the dark blue eyes that scowled from under a pair of long lashes had something of roused defiance in them, as he turned the better to watch her swaying figure, and resting one arm on the back of the seat, leaned his forehead against his hand. Unconsciously he could not have assumed a position of more deliberate watchfulness. He was picturesque enough as he sat there, a small cap resting on his clustering dark hair, his brown, handsome features with the well-cut nose and chin, the loose collar revealing a full brown throat, the broad shoulders betraying strength and activity; only in the eyes the spirit seemed to slumber; they revealed a slowness to act, a tendency to dream rather than think; almost a heaviness lay in their violet depths, filled now with a sullen annoyance.

But he was a goodly sight for the eyes to rest on. One would have said, "What a picturesque youth! If he were educated, what possibilities!"

The girl had sauntered only a few steps. She stood still, twirling her parasol on her shoulder, and looking toward the miniature lake. There were few people about, some children and their nurses near by on the grass. Later the park would be thronged. She turned a little, and tossed another glance, with bright dark eyes, back at the figure on the bench. The attitude this time evidently pleased her better. She smiled to herself, tapped with her foot a minute on the gravel, looking down, then turned, humming under her breath, and started more slowly than ever, raising the folds of her light muslin dress with a pretty sweep. As she did so, a long light glove fell from her hand, but she walked on, unheeding.

Slowly something unknown to him before had dawned on the youth's consciousness. She was alone, she was idle, she was beautiful; would she, after all, scorn to speak to him? Her

smile was charming. At any rate, she had lost her glove, and her swaying figure was already in the shadow of the trees beyond.

"Mademoiselle, permettez"—a pair of eyes, clear with their native innocence, timid before the smiling calmness of her beauty, met hers as she lowered the ruffled parasol, and reached out a hand for the glove.

"Thank you a thousand times! I had lost it? Come, you never keep what other people have lost?"

"But it belonged to you—why should I?"

"That is right. You are right, mon ami! You may learn differently some day in this gay Paris. Until then, our lost trinkets will be safe!"

She was laughing—laughing at his lowered eyes that only



took courage now and then to seek her face, but when they had once met hers, she smiled frankly and amicably, and held his glance to hers, enjoying his dumb admiration of her beauty and dispelling his fear.

"You are from Brittany? I know it well. It is a dear country. You think of it often? But Paris you will adore. Paris belongs to us all—we are all happy here. Come, sit here, and tell me about yourself. You are lonely, and so am I, and then—you brought me back my glove. I did not dream that you would do it, you looked so quiet there on the bench—quiet and cold and far away. Your eyes, too, they were full of things far

away. Now, they begin a little to look at me! You are no longer afraid of a stranger, I hope—no, of course not. You have courage, have you not? Is that why you are looking at me?”

“You—you are so beautiful,” he murmured, bewildered, his eyes never leaving hers—eyes that already had something more than dreams in them, thoughts that dwelt only on her as he sat beside her on the low stone seat with the water glinting through the trees in front, and the broken colonnade behind them.

How was it that he told her so much, in that soft spring afternoon, of himself and his work, and his half-unconscious ambitions, he who spoke so little to any one? There was something magical in the sympathy and understanding of her eyes; and she in her turn found herself watching with fascination his long lashes as he raised them to look at her, or bent his eyes on the ground. She recognized the nature of the artist, and his sensitive love of beauty; and yet he was only a stone cutter, working on the cathedral of Montmartre. It was his ambition to be a sculptor, and he amused himself by modeling in his leisure hours. Of his people he spoke little, but he had evidently cut adrift from them, to try his own fortunes in the great city of Paris.

“And who will you go back to with your fame or fortune, when it is won?” she smiled at him, with the friendly air that had disarmed him from the first. “Isn’t there some one waiting for you, to be proud of you?”

He was silent, and his thoughts went back to the long, low Breton coast, and the village where he had grown up. Pretty faces smiled on him, as in memory, he walked again through the narrow streets, but there beamed a face on him braver and better than the rest. Often he had seen her, barefooted, as she helped to drag the nets along the sands. Again he was with her in the wide, rough boat, tossing on a sunny sea, while the gulls flashed their white wings above them. Each pulled at an oar, and he remembered her laugh as the wind tossed her auburn hair in her eyes. He felt the grasp of her supple brown fingers, as in the falling darkness he helped her from the boat to the shore. And then that last evening, as they came home late over the wet sands, in a wind that drowned both their voices, so that she crept close to his side as she said good-bye at the cottage door. For one instant the lamplight on her face, looking at him, then she was gone.

Used to thinking out his own thoughts, he had sat silent, while his companion was waiting for an answer. When he raised his head and saw again with a start, the park, the gleaming water, and the woman at his side, he became conscious that some one had passed behind them on the grass, and that his companion had moved a little; but he saw no one but a tall Frenchman, followed by a black poodle, strolling down the path ahead of them, and she was looking at him with quiet amusement.

"So there is some one, who fills your dreams occasionally! But that is quite right and natural. I think much more of you for it, and some day, when you have finished chipping the rough edges off the *Sacré Cœur*, she will be coming on to Paris, and you will have a gay little bridal party in the Bois!"

He flushed a little, slowly, and she saw that he was not pleased. He thought of those vague, dim days when he and his little Breton girl had seemed at one with nature, when speech even had not mattered, and a hard day's work in the old fishing boat was all the toil and duty that life contained. From those days of boyhood he had entered another sphere, and become a man. Life was wide, confusing, complex; there were so many things he did not know. Nature, the sea, and the sky, could not here speak to men; amid all their din and self-absorption they did not care to hear. His fellow-workmen jarred on him, with their disputes, and their clatter, and their discontent. And yet, pent-up in himself as he had been these three months, the complexity, the grandeur, the excitement of this new world thrilled him! She was his first confidante, this beautiful creature, to whom he was talking with such ease and assurance, and who seemed to anticipate all he would say. Simple fellow, so unconscious was he of the light in his eyes as he talked, and of how he revealed his susceptible nature, just awakening, in every word and look.

"I am sorry that I must say good-bye," she said at last, "but I have been here too long already. They will be wondering where I am."

His face fell, and she smiled a little to herself as she thought how easily she could stir him. Already there was a deeper light in his eyes, and he looked at her oftener and with more confidence.

"Do you—do you come here—often?" he faltered, hardly

knowing what to say, and yet fearing he should lose her forever.

"Yes," she said, "nearly every Sunday, for a little while. If you are here again"—with a little nod—"we can have another talk."

He followed her in silence as she went along the grass-bordered paths. There she stopped to tell him the story of Gabrielle d'Estrée, the mistress of Henri IV., and of the pet dogs who were buried in the little island in the lake with the stone arcade for their monument—the whim of a spoiled woman. As they neared the gate that leads to the Avenue Hoche, a black poodle dog ran across the grass and jumped eagerly against her. She laughed and ordered him away, and the young fellow turned to see in the distance the figure of the same Frenchman, walking away from them. The Breton raised his foot, and gave the fantastically shaved brute such a kick that he ran whining away. "That man might at least keep his animal near him—has he spoiled your dress?" he asked, turning calmly toward her. Something in his manner, as he stood quietly before her, pleased her better than ever. She laughed as she declared no harm was done, and held out her hand—the hand destitute of its glove—for they had reached the shaded gateway. He took it gravely, without raising his eyes, and bowed over it with an air as of a gracious kindness done him.

"Thank you so much," he said, "and if I may see you here again—it is a great happiness for me." She got into a fiacre that was standing near, and giving a quick order, drove off with a single pleasant nod. Left alone he surveyed the park, but even the absurd poodle and his elegant master had vanished, and the sun was near setting. He started slowly for his lodgings, in the vicinity of Montmartre, and going to his tiny room under the roof, threw himself in a deep, old chair and gazed at the glow in the sky, trying to feel as if he were again on the Breton sands, with only clouds and sea to limit his horizon.

But her face kept coming back to him, in the verdant shade of the park, with the distant hum of Paris replacing the roar of the sea. How gracious she had been, and how wonderful that golden afternoon! He had left his lonely, dull lodgings, silent, solitary, shut up within himself; he had come back changed, life was changed—there was a channel in it he had never known. He had been drawn into it—he was no more

standing inactive on the bank, but the deep, resistless current was carrying him on. This new and wonderful world had become his own, he had a veritable share in it. Was that life, back on the Breton coast? What did it all mean then? No, that was not life—he had only just begun to live.

* * * * *

The following week he was not tardy in his arrival under the spreading trees, and chose a lonely spot in which to dream until the lady of his thoughts should appear. He began to fear she would not come, as the shadows lengthened, and the voices of the children on the grass ceased. But at last she approached from another direction than where they had parted the previous week. She wore a dress of a peculiar soft green, with a great cream rose nodding in her belt, and an immense black hat. She walked slowly, looking idly ahead of her, and his heart sank. She had doubtless forgotten all about him, or that she had told him to be there. He rose from his seat, but did not move from his place, letting Fate decide whether this longed-for happiness should be his or not. When she had passed him some distance, she stopped as if suddenly remembering, and retracing her steps, spied him at last, and stood still, smiling. Then he came forward, his head bare, all the blood in his body rushing to his heart, and surging out again, sending a deep glow over his handsome brown face.

"I was afraid I should not see you again," he said, looking at her and then glancing down, with the half-awe that delighted her. "It grew so late."

"Yes; I was detained to-day," she sighed a little, as she leaned against the trunk of the great chestnut; "I can so seldom go anywhere. Some days I never leave the house, but Sunday is everyone's holiday in Paris, and to miss this quiet stroll here, and this air——" She drew a deep breath, and involuntarily he followed her sweeping glance, drinking in, as he had not before, the beauty and stillness of the luxuriant garden, with the glowing sky shining through the trees on the water.

"I am so tied down," she said, as if speaking half to him, half to herself. "If you could see my father—but no one ever sees him—crippled and helpless—an artist, but miserably helpless—you would have some idea of what my life is. He will have no one but me near him, to see his weakness—no one that he knew before, when he was strong and clever, and rising in

fame. There are only a few friends who come on the days when he is free enough from suffering to enjoy their talk, but even then to hear of pleasures and work he cannot share, hurts and wearies him. One cannot blame him for his impatience, and cynicism, and bitterness; he had such a splendid career before him. So you see, I, too, am cut off from friends and outside pleasures. I loved it, too, when I lived in it, the gay, easy atmosphere of Bohemia! That is one reason why you interest me so much—you belong to the world of artists—you have the soul of an artist." She smiled as she spoke, and made as if she would toss aside, in this short, lovely hour, all memory of the sad, monotonous existence of which she had been speaking. His eyes had grown deep and dark.

"You seemed to me," he said, "so happy and gay, I never dreamed that you lived such a lonely life. It does not seem as if one could, in Paris."

"I must not be too tragic!" she exclaimed. "There are some good times, for I have young artist cousins who take me about, when some inexplicable mood comes over my poor father, and he spares me from his sight. But how has the week gone with you? You are happy, are you not? And working well? You will be promoted, I foresee, to making designs and plans for this great cathedral—and the little girl at home, how proud she will be!"

"I have been doing finer work lately," he said. "The architect was talking with me the other day, for Jacques Martin, who works near me, had seen some designs I had drawn, and told him of them. They were all out of my head, and badly done, he said, but he was pleased and asked me to do more."

"Let me see them when they are done—perhaps they will interest father, too. I wish I could tell you to come and talk with him, but there is no hope of that."

"It is so much—that you let me talk with you," he murmured. They sat silent for a little while, he intensely conscious of her slight figure near him, something throbbing hard in his temples. He pictured in his mind, without daring to turn and look, the warm beauty of her face, the tempting curve of her lips. The trees, the sky, the water, seemed to fade in a mist. Some feeling of which he was not master swept over him—he scarcely could breathe.

And suddenly a cool hand laid on his, and her voice saying in a low tone:

"Good-bye again, or rather, 'au revoir.' Will you come another time, and see me again?"

"See you again?" he repeated slowly, standing beside her, seeing only, in the mist that seemed to envelop them both, her eyes answering with a faint reflection of the fire that was consuming him. "Why must it be so long? I thought this week would never end."

"It cannot be before," she said gently. "Work hard, and win more praise, to tell me of when we meet. I work, too, you know; but it is not for myself. And you—you are working for the little Breton girl."

She laughed gayly, and he came back to real life as one comes out of a dark room into the prosaic glare of day. He set his teeth, and tossed the thick curls back from his forehead impatiently, and again followed her, quickly to-night.

"Let me go home with you, it is so late, and nearly dark," he exclaimed. But she persisted in refusal, and got once more into a fiacre, driving away through the dusk.

"So I am working for Jeanne. She is to come and praise my success—a bridal party in the Bois and what then? Not life, but existence, dull, no one understanding." All these new, unknown things unexplained, the beautiful creature who alone seemed able, and willing, to reveal all these mysteries, gone out of his life; no, a thousand times, no! Forget dull boyhood, forget pretty, stupid Jeanne—forget loneliness and poverty—forget everything but the wild, delicious, overwhelming tide that swept through his veins at the thought of his lady—all but the desire to be with her, to touch her—his hands trembled—to learn from her lips all that life had to yield.

* * * * *

The French landlady said that Paris had changed her quiet lodger. He came in late, leaping up the shabby stairs where he had been wont to tread so soberly. She did not know that he had only been walking the gayly lighted streets, to and fro, while many a friendly neighbor had detailed to him in vain the delights of music gardens and eating houses. There was hardly a quarter of Paris where his nightly strolls had not led him. Often he went in the moonlight to the scene of his daily labor—the church of the *Sacré Cœur* on the heights of Montmartre—up the narrow steep street, where in the daytime innumerable booths displayed crucifixes, rosaries, candles,

religious books, every kind of devotional wares to tempt the pilgrim without too much lightening his scanty purse.

From the height Paris was glorious with her myriad lights, and the Seine winding far away. All the tense, throbbing life of a great city lying below him, and the serene, solemn stars. Here again the old sense of peace and freedom would come upon him—the sense of communion with nature, with the illimitable sky; and it meant something more to him now—he need not be alone in it as he had always been—he had not known what life held before.

It was Sunday again, and he was leaning against the great doorway of the cathedral, glorying in the wind, in the wondrous city below him, in the joy that surged in his heart—standing where we first found him.

She was coming, late, to join him here. He had seen her twice again in the park, and each time he had felt the spell of her beauty and charm still more, and dared to look at her more often with his soul burning in his eyes. There was little question of her being kind. He was sure he had read response in her eyes as each day he had held her fingers in a strong, insistent grasp. He thought of her leaning here, till his violet eyes flashed with intensity of feeling. She herself, coming out of the dimness of the great gray church, was a little startled at the spirited beauty in the face she had learned to read like an open book.

They went up the long stairs to the roof, and still on up the rough scaffolding over the unfinished dome that she might see where he worked daily, and dreamed dreams of her as he carved at the rough stone. It was a dizzy height that they reached at last, and the wind drowned their voices, and swayed the frail timbers.

"Is it safe?" she said, half frightened.

"You are safe anywhere with me," was his passionate answer. She swayed as the wind swept against her, and he caught her in his arms, kissing her lips and eyes, reaching at last that heaven on earth that she had taught him to dream of.

They were alone between earth and sky; the wild wind seemed sweeping them on in its resistless strength—on to wild sweet spaces, where they two should be alone, pressing her closer in the grasp of his strong arms, laughing in triumph at the human passion it beheld.

It was a long, wondrous moment. The bell tolling the hour from the old church below them broke the spell, and she pushed him slowly from her with a trembling sigh.

He followed her along the frail scaffolding, creaking in the wind, now helping her past a dangerous corner, now shielding her with his arm as a sudden blast nearly swept them off their feet. It was on the dim, steep stairs that led down into the body of the church that she turned to him, laying her hand on his:

"You forgot yourself," she said, "I was wrong to come here to-day. It was all a strange dream—we must forget it."

"My God!" he said, in a low tone, "you are not going to deny me now?"

"But I am wronging you," she insisted, looking at him for the first time; but the dim pleading in her eyes maddened him. "There is that other girl in the North."

"'Diable!' I never cared! I have forgotten everything, everyone—but you."

"I wish I could bring you to my father, but he is selfish, of course. If I ever hinted that I cared for some one else he would want to die—he would say that even I had forsaken him. But, yes, I can see you as before, and here, again, perhaps. If I could only help you more!"

He smiled his reproach, and she could not but marvel at the change these weeks had wrought in him. All his deep, strong soul was in his face, and he now put in words the thoughts that before had made his eyes intense with suppressed utterance.

"You are so good, so true," he whispered, pressing her hands in his strong fingers, "I never knew there was any one like you."

The architect of the *Sacré Cœur* was a gay, good-looking Frenchman, and his fancy had been caught by the picturesque young *Marteau*.

One evening he climbed the stairs to the out-of-the-way lodging, enjoying the discomfiture of his young protégé, whom he surprised stretched out in an old *fauteuil*, gazing out of the window.

"What a stupid fellow you are to sit mooning here! Come and I will introduce you to Paris, and make you gay for once with the rest of us."

In spite of resistance he was beguiled down into the streets, alive with a chattering crowd. The "café chantant," to which his new friend led him, was a fair representative of the gayer resorts of Paris; but, alive now to a sense of critical regard and his own manner toward the world, he tried to answer the flippant remarks of his friend with a face indifferent as his own, and not to betray any surprise at the scene before him.

One of the dancers in particular attracted his notice—she was more lithe, and slight, and lovely than any of the rest, and something in her face recalled to him the woman he loved.

He leaned abruptly over and whispered:

"Do these girls choose this life?"

"'Mon Dieu,' yes," said the architect, who had been watching his face with some curiosity. "You shall talk to some of them later, if you like. This is an education for you, my young friend."

At the end of an hour the scene grew wilder, the dancers circling in and out among the little tables that covered the floor. The girl he had noticed came slowly, now stopping to sip from some friendly glass held up to her, or to lean indolently against the shoulder of an admirer as she puffed at his cigarette. As she came nearer, and all eyes were drawn by her beauty, a blackness of darkness blinded his eyes, and in that moment he thought the icy cold at his heart meant death. There was no mistake, no illusion—it was really she. He had enough wit left to rise and make his way out, the din of music and laughter in his ears. No one followed him, his friend had not noticed, or else chose to enjoy his evening to the end.

All that he remembered afterwards of that horrible night was darkness, and the blood surging in his ears.

He let a week pass without going to the park where they had always met, staying always alone, afraid, with a foolish fear, that he might meet her somewhere. He kept far from the house where she had told him she lived, and which he had often passed in his nightly rambles.

But with the second Sunday came the longing to see her again—the mad fear that he might have been mistaken and wronged her in his heart, the faint leaping hope that she might be true. It grew on him, till he wondered why he had waited, like a fool, so long; it were better to see her, and demand the truth from her own lips. But as afternoon drew on, his heart

failed him. If she were true, how could he insult her with accusing words?

He left his room early, and entered the park at the far end, through which she usually came. He loitered in the shady paths, watching narrowly all who passed. At one minute he was full of hope. She would come, as always before, with her light, slow step over the grass. She would meet him with a little anxious cry, and ask why he had failed her the week before. But here again his heart sank; if she had truly loved him why had she sent no sign?—he might have been suddenly ill.

And if she still loved him—why not laugh at her clever lie, accept all in her life and surroundings, so that he had for his own herself and her wonderful beauty?

It was fully an hour earlier than his accustomed tryst, as he waited, leaning against a tree-trunk in the shadows. And suddenly she came, walking at a little distance, but not alone. Beside her walked the tall Frenchman and the stupid poodle he remembered to have seen six weeks before. How gay she was!

They sat down on a stone seat not far away, and he of the elegant mustaches stopped between the puffs of his cigarette to gaze boldly, laughing, into her eyes, or pull off her long gloves and stroke the slender fingers that Marteau remembered so well. He drew stealthily nearer, and shielded by a great tree-trunk, their voices came distinctly to him.

"If your country boy comes now will he kill me?" said her lover.

"'Mon Dieu!' you think he would dare when I am here?" she laughed; "but there is no danger. I have told him I can never leave my father till after five o'clock!"

"Clever one! And you never kept me waiting but once, that first day, when I saw you tête-à-tête with a shy rustic, I was amused! And how near Frou Frou came to spoiling your pretty comedy! Ugh! the fellow gave her such a cuff I had a mind to return it in his eyes."

"Such lovely eyes!" she laughed. "Oh, Gaston, but it was worth while to draw him on, when at first he was speechless, with those great eyes staring at me, and then, when he lost his head. 'Dieu, qu'il était beau!' I could have made a man of him, but he is ill, or some one else has captured him now, and he has forgotten his pretty saint, the poor, self-denying recluse, who wanted so much to help him to be good."

They both laughed, she with her cheek against her companion's shoulder.

"It couldn't be possible that he had seen the prettiest danseuse in Paris, or heard of her salon and its prim little gatherings."

"Impossible!" she exclaimed. "He never leaves his room, except to walk up and down before a house far on the other side of the town."

"*'Sapristi!*' it is too delicious! To fancy you in company with a clumsy fisherman."

"A tongue-tied stonecutter, if you please, *mon ami*. Come, have you forgotten that to-night——"

The dog, which had strayed far away, came suddenly yelping to its master, holding up a bruised paw. A figure was vanishing swiftly through the trees.

"*'Mon Dieu!*' could it have been he?" she said, breathless, but trying to laugh. "If he heard he may kill you. He is like a strong lion. Come away—let us go."

"Absurd! he would dare nothing, he is too dull. It cannot have been he, for we would certainly have been conscious of any one standing near enough to hear! The clumsy countryman, has he hurt you, *Frou Frou*, my beauty?"

"I am sorry my amusement is over! It is your fault, you stupid Gaston, that you brought me here at this hour. He never interfered with you, and he was far better looking!"

"You shall pay for that, little one."

They got into a chic little victoria waiting at the gate, and drove toward the Bois.

Marteau walked with long strides toward Montmartre.

So she was all a lie, a beautiful, wicked lie, and he had served to amuse her for a few summer afternoons, and to amuse her lover dawdling with his dandy Paris airs, along the shady paths.

A shy rustic, a clumsy fisherman. God, how he had been duped! He clinched his teeth—when she had told him with that divinely sympathetic smile, that he had the soul of an artist, and that her hour with him was the only bright spot in her weary existence. And her windows he had mooned under, with such idolatrous tenderness in his heart. And the ambition she had called forth—he had never worked as during the past month. And then his kisses and the look in her eyes. Were other women as false?

He went up the long, steep street, lined with its tawdry booths, to the Church of the Sacré Cœur—up to the roof, and the dome, on to the highest point, where they had stood that day, alone in the wild wind.

There was always a wind up here, high above the great teeming city. It rushed past him now, mocking and triumphant—not seeming to carry him with it—deriding as it left him there, going on its own wild, willful way.

He tried to call back the creature, the ideal he had loved and shut his eyes, breathing hard, as the reality came to him.

He thought of the little fisher-girl, but her image, her face, had gone from him.

There was nothing in all the world for him but a lost dream, and treachery, and deceit. Yes, there was revenge, but would it pay? If he had but killed him there, beside her. Better still, there was this—

He waited—he thought no more—but going to the edge of the scaffolding he leaped blindly forward.



The architect of the Sacré Cœur was sincerely startled and sorry when he heard of young Marteau's death.

"A handsome fellow, he showed some promise," he said to the master builder.

"Sad accident—the workmen will have it that it brings bad luck," was the reply.

The occurrence was noted in some of the papers.



THE ADVENTURE OF THE LEADING HANDS*

BY W. F. SHANNON

"What for do we join the Navy? For the fat livin' and the funeral—wid full naval honors. But what for *really* do we join? Well, honest, it's for ship's t'bacca and glory."

The Bluejacket: a Comedy.

IT was toward the close of the third year of H. M. S. Tarantula's commission that five of her leading hands arranged for their famous picnic. They each "put in" for a day's leave, and got it; they took the dinghy, by permission of the first lieutenant; and the gunner's mate persuaded the gunner to allow them rifles and ammunition. Besides the gunner's mate the party consisted of the chief armorer, the leading torpedo man, the captain's coxswain, and the sergeant-major of marines, and very early one fine morning those five adventurers sailed away for the Lafu River, ten miles south of the Las-mayu roadstead, where the Tarantula lay anchored.

The dinghy had not gone a couple of miles when the picknickers discovered that they had brought no provisions. So they turned back to get some, the Lafu River having no supplies to speak of.

"This," said the sergeant-major, "is what comes of havin' five commandin' officers and no workin' hands. It's all right for 'kinyans'—they had some store of darkest hell whisky aboard—" 'kinyans' we can all five of us easy recommember, but the commisserant department didn't ought to be left to chance like that. A picnic, there's no doubt, ought to be conducted with a certain amount of routine."

"No pipeclay, 'major,' if it's all the same to you," interrupted the armorer.

"And I begs to propose," continued the sergeant-major,

*From "The Idler."

ignoring the hit at his profession, "that the gunner's mate takes on cap'n of this turnout."

"Hear, hear," said Chats, the L. T. O. (leading torpedo man). "It's clearly understood that in all cases of picnic parties the commander spreads the tablecloth and looks after the spoons, ain't it? I'm all on for the gunner's mate."

So were the other two, and the gunner's mate gruffly, and as his due, accepted the post.

The boat victualed amid the unflattering remarks of the ship's company, and at 7.30 A. M. again shoved off. The river-mouth was again reached about nine o'clock, but the picknickers' objective was a great way up the river, near a village called Mkumbi, where there might be a chance of replenishing the "wet" provisions. This spot was only attained at high noon.

* * * * *

Lasmayu and the Lafu River are in East Africa, north of Zanzibar. H. M. S. Tarantula, with three or four others of Her Majesty's vessels, comprised the East Coast Division of the Cape Station. This division patrols all the coast from Gaza to the Juba River, putting down the slave trade, assisting the British consuls and pro-consuls, and keeping the peace of the whole seaboard.

Each ship carries two or more Arab or Swahili interpreters, whose main business is to get information as to intended slave runs. They land each evening if near a town, and, by means of informers and spies in their pay, ascertain the movements of the slavers. Nowadays captures are very infrequent. Many times, indeed, the Tarantula's interpreters would come off quivering with excitement, and with much gesticulation and rolling of eyes, give absolutely certain information of an intended run. The whole ship would get excited with them, too, during the early part of the commission, and often the boats were called away and eagerly manned for a night's slave-chasing. But it was always a fiasco. They would lay for long hours by the mangrove swamps, or scour creeks and coasts and estuaries from sunset to dawn, at the bidding of the interpreters, but at the end of nearly three years not a single slaver had been captured, not a single slave set free. And that is why this picnic of the P. O.'s becomes the most notable event of the commission.

After dinner the five were going shooting, but the day was

so hot that they determined, like Amaryllis, to do their sporting in the shade.

"This 'kinyans' don't make ye much cooler, do it?" observed the armorer.

The remark was a reflection on a lecture the ship's doctor had given a short time before on spirit-drinking. The doctor was an enthusiastic teetotaler, and had shown that alcohol, so far from being a necessity, was not even a luxury. He quoted Dr. Nansen, who was all in favor of sugar when you are camping out on icepacks, and whaling captains, who swore by hot coffee; and wound up by saying that although a nip of spirits apparently warms the body, yet really its action is to lower its vitality and eventually to cool it.

"No, it don't seem to make you cooler," said the L. T. O., "but, then, the doctor's main argument was to show what delusions we're laboring under, us common men. We drink 'kinyans' and get hot—at least, we feel hot and look hot——"

"And, damme, for all practical purposes, we are hot," said the sweating sergeant-major.

"Exactly, my man," continued the L. T. O., imitating the doctor. "But theoretically we are delightfully cool, and therefore we are doin' quite right to drink spirits in the tropics. Coffee's all very well on the North American Station, where they want to warm up, but fatal, absolutely fatal, under a broilin' sun."

"But there's another point," said the armorer, sipping his whisky. "If you takes the wine when it's red, or even 'kinyans' when it's a nootral tint, it lowers your vital stakistics."

"Orgies! vitiated orgies!" corrected the captain's coxswain.

"If you lower your vitiated orgies much more, Hooky, you'll be standin' on 'em," said the L. T. O. "What McDonald was sayin' was that all liquor, even 'tambo,' lowers your vital forces, wasn't you, Mac?"

The armorer confessed that he was. "And why we puts away stuff so lowerin' to the vitals," he added, "I do not knqw."

"Now you're gettin' on to square and top-shelf stuff, Mac. What's the matter with 'kinyans'?"

"Nothink, I admit. Pass it along." And the contrite armorer lowered some into his vitals.

But the day was really too hot for scientific argument, and so, gradually, the conversation waned, and the five holiday-

makers "fell on sleep," as the poets say, and for the rest of the afternoon lay in the deep easy slumber of seamen. It was only as the sun was at its setting that the captain's coxswain roused, and stared for a moment at the long shadows. Then he woke in earnest and observed the wind and tide for a minute or two.

"We're properly adrift this time," he muttered, and rapidly awakened the other four. No one thanked him, but all growled because he had not done it sooner, which is the way of the navy.

The boat was hurriedly launched. There was just enough wind to keep steerage way with the sail set, but the mid-stream current was strong, and the forlorn picknickers—who were at least two hours late in starting back—slid between the darkening banks toward the sea at a fair pace, each man silently filling his pipe.

"Lend us a match, someone," growled the gunner's mate, sticking his black clay in his mouth.

The armorer remarked that he had none left.

No one else spoke, but each waited, pipe in hand or mouth, for some one else to produce the matches.

"Come on, out with 'em," said the gunner's mate, impatiently.

Each man was by this time overhauling himself to see if he had any. It was all in vain, and the dreadful truth broke over the unfortunate five that they had to face a five hours' pleasure trip with neither of the attributes of pleasure. "Kin-yans," alas! was exhausted, and now smoking was impossible. Mkumbi was higher up the river, and it was not likely to have matches as a commodity. There was nothing for it but to sit, like the famous tea-party, "all silent and all damned," and invent excuses to satisfy the first lieutenant for breaking their leave.

The gunner's mate at last broke the silence. "Of all the cussed, dashed, blasted, blighted idjuts in the navy," he said, slowly and deliberately, "us five are the dashedest, blastedest, blightedest and cussedest!"

"Thanks, Sammy," said the L. T. O. "Continue."

"And such a devil of a lot of tand-stickors as they makes in Germany, too! And the little cherib, the sweet little cherib what looks arter pore Jack, what about him? Eh, you theory

men, where's he?" and the gunner's mate slapped the L. T. O. on the back.

Chats said dryly, "Well, let X equal the sweet little cherib, and Y the missin' match——"

"And why the missin' match? That's the main objec'. None of your Euclid for me! None of your Vernon touches! All this X-chasin' and theory muck don't give us no matches. It's useless, theory is."

"How about the theory of gunnery?" asked the L. T. O. "That ought to teach us how to get a light, with rifles and ammunition."

"Good on ye, Chats," said the coxswain. "I can remember being taught about that on the Saint."

"The theory is this," continued the L. T. O. "Load with blank cartridge, stick a piece of slow-match on the cleanin'-rod, and hold it just clear of the muzzle of the rifle. When fired the charge will naturally ignite the slow-match."

"Where's your slow-match?" grunted the gunner's mate.

"As I was about to say, my dear Sammy, paper will have to do this journey."

At once all but the coxswain, who was at his usual post, the tiller, set about extracting bullets from cartridges and experimenting in the way described, with the result that four bits of paper were blown into the water, quickly followed by four more. Again and again the trial was made, with the same result, varied by the paper being held so far off that the flame failed to touch it.

"No go! Theory again!" said the disgusted gunner's mate.

"How about a train of damp powder?" queried the armorer.

A train was laid on the gunwale, and a half-charge fired into it. What wasn't blown away fizzed out too quickly to catch a piece of paper held to it. While it was being tried again the sergeant-major and the L. T. O. conducted an experiment of their own in the bows of the boat. The marine held the gunner's mate's straw hat on a cleaning-rod while the seaman fired a full charge obliquely through the crown of it. The hat was old and greasy, and they had every reasonable hope of igniting it. That experiment also failed, and the disheartened petty officers settled themselves in gloomy silence for the long down-river sail. Each sucked his unlit pipe, and furtively searched and researched his pockets.

An hour passed. It had long been quite dark, and it was necessary to keep a lookout man in the bows. He and the helmsman were the only men who spoke. During the second hour, while the gunner's mate was taking his spell in the bow, he saw a dhow's sail glide out from one of the side creeks, and show dimly against the stars. He passed the word to the others, without importing any significance to it.

The L. T. O. roused himself sufficiently to say, "What about them lucifers, then?"

"Well, what about 'em?" snapped the gunner's mate savagely.

"On'y if I was commandin' this packet I should heave that dhow to, and get some. Please yourself, though. P'raps you don't care to smoke."

"Here, hand us a muskit!" was the gunner's mate's response. "What's Swyhili for 'heave to'?"

"'Tuâ tanga.' But the best language is a shot across her bows. All nations and languages understand that."

The dhow was now maybe five hundred yards off the port bow of the dinghy, and well in the main stream. The hull was hidden against the dark background of mangroves, but the sail was just discernible. The dinghy was probably quite invisible from the larger vessel. No sound came from either boat.

The gunner's mate broke the silence of the night with a tremendous shout of "'Tuâ-tanga! Tuâ! Tuâ!'" and without waiting for an answer, fired his rifle. The dhow's big lateen sail dropped literally as if shot, and she was lost to sight immediately.

"Out oars!" shouted the rifleman. "We shall lose them matches after all."

The oars were in the crutches smartly, and the dinghy rapidly moved toward the dhow. The latter's hull soon appeared, and as the small boat neared her the sail was seen to be lying confusedly over her side, while the crew were struggling to get the sweeps out.

"I do believe Sammy's shot must have cut away the halyards of that sail," said the coxswain. "It was lowered terrible smart."

"Jest like Samuel, that is," growled the armorer over his oar. "We're goin' in for leave-breakin' as it is, and now he's goin' to luff us in for piratin' on the high seas with aggravatin'

circumstances. Jest fancy respectable married men like me and Sammy swingin' at the yardarm for murderin' peaceful Swyhilis."

"This is all theory, y'know," said the gunner's mate, a trifle frightened. "Still, p'raps we better sheer off. We shan't be able to make 'em understand what we want, either."

"You stay boat-keeper, then," said the L. T. O. "I'm a single man wantin' a match, I am; and I'm going to get it. Look out; we're nearin' her. Hooky, give Sam the tiller. Us four board all together, carryin' our rifles. We'll bounce the cap'en we took him for a slaver, and demand to see his papers. Then we'll let him off for givin' us all this trouble, if he'll give us a light. Way enough! Stand by to jump aboard as soon as we get alongside. Prepare to board. Board!" And as the dinghy rasped against the dhow's side the four men scrambled over the low bulwark of the native vessel and leaped upon the deck. As they did so there was a succession of splashes on the other side of the dhow. The crew and captain had dived off.

"There's no doubt them poor chaps do take us for gory cut-throat buccaneers," said the L. T. O.

"Here!" he shouted to the swimmers, who were making for the shore. "Hi! Hold on a minit! We sailormen! English! We no hurt you!" They took no notice.

"Well, I can't speak no fairer than that, can I?" he said, turning to his friends.

They admitted that he couldn't. The sergeant-major added that he thought they'd better cut and run themselves. "This is turnin' into a serious business, y'know, Chats."

"My dear 'Major,' I want a light. Help us off with this forehatch. Hooky, feel round the after-cabin, will ye? Fine touch this, ain't it?" went on the L. T. O. "Five leadin' hands plunderin' an inoffensive trader."

"Phew!" ejaculated the sergeant-major, as the hatch-covering was taken off. "Inoffensive! She's putrid! I reckon she's a sort of a night-tun."

Chats knelt on the deck and peered down the hatchway. There arose a sound of labored breathing and stifled moans.

"Cattle?" suggested the sergeant-major.

"Yes. Long pork," answered the L. T. O., who had been in the South Seas. "Down with the hatch! Up with the sail!

Mates, never mind the matches. We've got a prize-package here."

"I don't like the smell of her," said the armorer. "But what is it you're talkin' about? What's the noise, to put it classic?"

"Slaves, that's what it is. By the ghost of marines, she's full of 'em. I seen the whites of their eyes, plain as anything. Make fast the dinghy, Sam, and come aboard. You won't be hung, so don't be afraid," he added, as the gunner's mate hesitated. "This piracy turns out to be meritorious service—slave-catching. We shan't have to sneak inboard, Samuel, avoidin' the eye of Number One, but we shall go back simply covered with glory."

"Are you quite sure about all this?" said the gunner's mate as he stepped aboard.

"Here's some matches," said the coxswain, "so we can see."

They lifted the hatch, and peeped below again. Undoubtedly a human cargo was there, dumb and piteous, frightened into silence by the Arabs.

"Well, then, now for it," said the gunner's mate, whose confidence was restored. "Better get up this sail, I s'pose?"

"Let's light up first," said the L. T. O. calmly.

The suggestion met with favor, and then the buccaneers set about seeing what mischief their shot had done. It was found to have cut the halyard and chipped the yard, but the latter was not materially damaged. Without entering on a detailed description of the method of hoisting the sail—of pendant and whip, hauling part and standing part, block and sheave—it will suffice to describe it as that of a rope passed through a sheave at the masthead, one end made fast to the yard, and the other left free for hauling purposes. The necessary repairs, therefore, consisted simply of rebending (re-tying) the pendant to the yard. The sail was then hoisted, and with light hearts the seamen swept on down the river, smoking deliciously. The breeze had freshened and the dhow sailed fast.

Chats, the L. T. O., sat thoughtfully for awhile. Then he said:

"We received information that this packet was to sail when we was picknickin'. So we forgot all about our dinner, just nicely laid, and considered evolutions all the afternoon. We carefully examined the matter in all its bearin's, and cross-

questioned the informer, and finally surmised that a sudden attack by us five was worth tryin'. We worried a good bit about bein' adrift after our leave was up (and never recovered our lost appetites, we might mention), and felt we was settin' a bad example to the ship's company, and the service in general. But we conquered our inclinations, which was to go straight back, and lay to at nightfall just off the creek, conceivin' that to be the strategic point. It was. The dhow comes out. We run alongside of her, and with our muskets in our hands (and I may remark that I've expended all my cartridges, and mine was unloaded) we swarm up her starboard gangway, while nine blood-thirsty Arabs dive off the port quarter and swim for their lives. How will that do, eh?"

The others had listened with rapt attention. Chats was a well-known novelist.

"Sounds all right," said the sergeant-major, "except them nine Arabs. Nine?"

"That number is an estimate, my dear 'Major.' In the heat of battle you never count exact, but you never count under. Savvy?"

"I do. We might mention Sammy's marvelous gunnery practice, though. Five hundred yards' range; whole objec' scarcely in sight; Sam sights for invisible detail and hits it. I never see such——"

"Tuâ! Tuâ tanga!" rang out over the waters. The river had opened out, and the dhow was nearing the open ocean. Four or five large streams met and formed a delta with the Lafu River, and the navigation of the delta was intricate and nicely suited to the slavers. The boat whence the hail had come could just be made out rounding one of the islands and rowing to cut the dhow off.

"A rescue, eh?" said the gunner's mate. "We oughtn't to 'a hung about so long lightin' pipes, Chats. We give them chaps too long a start."

"Bang!" went a rifle.

"Lay down, all of ye!" said the L. T. O. "You can keep out of sight pretty well, too, Hooky, while you're steerin'. I hold the sheet."

Again the Swahili command to heave to was shouted, and another rifle was fired. The "s-s-s" of the bullet across the bows followed.

A third shout was followed by a volley from three or four rifles. The one or two shots that hit went through the sail.

"Tryin' Sammy's dodge," observed the armorer. "But I reckon they ain't got a marksman like him."

Two other boats now appeared from the other side, well on the dhow's beam, and advanced firing. For a while the firing from each boat was very hot, and the dhow's sail was frequently hit. Still she forged ahead, and the pulling boats dropped gradually back, off her quarters.

"I didn't know Arabs used rowlocks," said the armorer, as the firing slackened a bit. "D'ye hear the regular stroke of the oars, Chats? Gad! it's our own boats, I do believe!"

"So it is!" assented the sergeant-major, joyfully. "Hail 'em, Sam, to stop that damned rifle practice."

"Hang on a bit," said the L. T. O., as the gunner's mate prepared to shout. "Consider. Are we to go to all the trouble and expense of capturin' a slave dhow to give it away to these other chaps? And lose all the glory, too? Why, they'd swear they could have captured it without our help."

"Right you are, Chats," agreed the coxswain.

"Therefore, mates, I say on to glory or the grave. 'Hear the river-bar roarin' at the ocean-gate?' There's freedom there, Sam. Buck up, 'Major'!"

"Look here, Chats," urged the latter, "this is carryin' the game a bit too far, ain't it? We break our leaf, we turn pirates, and now, damme, we're runnin' a cargo of slaves, and openly defyin' our own cap'n. It won't do!"

"'Major,' you've got no soul. I know you're married and ain't the man you was; but, hang it all, look at the reason of it. For our own sakes we mustn't be took. I knew who was after us at first. I whispered it to Hooky, didn't I, Hook? But there was no call for us to alarm you married men and get you into trouble at home. We hoped you wouldn't have suspected anything. Why didn't you keep quiet, Mac? Well, you'll have to swear you took 'em for Arabs. Here we are, safe." And the dhow, trailing the dinghy, passed the bar, and gained the ocean. The boats were lost in the blackness behind.

The dhow set her course for the Tarantula, and at eight bells in the middle watch (4 A. M.) cast anchor in the Lasmayu roadstead.

The L. T. O. and the captain's coxswain at once took the

dinghy and rowed to the Tarantula, just as the first lieutenant came on deck.

"Come aboard, sir," said Chats.

"Is this what you call nine o'clock? I shall report you all to the captain. I had just come up to send a boat in search of you. Nice handy set of men for P. O.'s we've got! Where's the others? You're a disgrace to the service. Where's the others, I say?"

"Formin' the prize crew, sir."

"Forming the what?"

"Prize crew, sir."

"What of? Did you meet the other boats?"

"Which boats, sir?"

"What are you a prize crew of?" snapped the lieutenant, angrily.

"Slave dhow, sir."

"Then you did meet the boats?"

"We took this dhow on our own, sir."

"What! You five in the dinghy!"

"There's no deviation about that, sir. And then we had a runnin' fight with some murderin' filibusters lower down the river. Reg'lar cut-throat lot they looked. Made our sail as holey as a kitchen cullender. But we outsailed them."

And the L. T. O. was invited to tell his whole story, and the mollified lieutenant called the captain.

While the latter was hearing the tale of the adventurous five, the Tarantula's pinnace and two cutters, under the command of the second lieutenant, came alongside, and the lieutenant came inboard and made his report. They had chased a dhow, he said, but she was a very fast sailer and escaped in the darkness.

"Never mind, Smithson, listen to this," said the captain.

When Chats came to the account of the attempted rescue by the slaver's friends, as he called it, the captain's eyes twinkled. The second lieutenant stared.

"You'd better go over and see to the capture, Smithson," said the captain, when the tale was done. "You might find a trace or two of your marksmen. Pity the gunner's mate wasn't with you, though. Is that a true part of your story, Anson, that shot of the gunner's mate?"

"Certainly, sir."

"And," said Lieutenant Smithson, "had you really no suspicion that that precious rescue party was the pinnacle and cutters?"

"Not the faintest, sir."

"Well, I used to give you credit for being an intellectual man——"

"Yes, sir," interpolated Chats, trying to look dull and stupid.

"But now—well, now I think more of your intellect than ever," sarcastically wound up the lieutenant.

"Gunner's mate was commandin' officer, sir."

"No doubt," said Lieutenant Smithson, dryly.

* * * * *

The dhow went before the prize court at Zanzibar, and was condemned. When captured she had forty-six slaves on board. A flattering account of the capture appeared in the papers, and the admiral, when inspecting the ship soon after at the conclusion of her commission, referred, in his speech to the ship's company, to the five petty officers in generous terms. They were, he said, examples to be copied by all young blue-jackets and marines. Their daring, resourcefulness, resolution, and regard for the good of the service was most commendable. And he was pleased to ask their captain to give them all "recommends" for higher ratings.

After it was all over the blushing heroes met together on the mess-deck.

"It's all through that shot of Sam's," said the coxswain. "I'll swear if I tried to shoot across a ship's bows I'd 'a done it easy. But Sam always tries to do your 'baulk.'"

"Still, if I hadn't wanted that match, I shouldn't 'a thought of shootin' to cut them halyards," said the gunner's mate, magnificently. He was quite persuaded by this time that he had deliberately sighted for the rope.

"There's no doubt it was a happy thought," said Chats. "How about that other shot, Sam, the one that carried away the crown of your hat? Felt any pain from it?"

"Not much. Of course, I felt a sort of wind at the time, and it raised a bit of a lump. But I took no notice. You don't in action. The excitement carries ye on. We was just crossin' the bar when I felt it."

"Interestin' experience," said the L. T. O., musingly. "I've

heard of men bein' clean-shaved by a cannon-ball, and havin' their hair cut short with a shovel-headed spear, but yours is the best cuff I've ever heard. I s'pose you're goin' to keep the hat as a curio?"

"Rather! There's some people wouldn't believe how near I'd been to havin' my head bloo off unless I showed 'em that."

"And will that convince 'em?"

"Certainly. Besides, you're witnesses. You as good as seen it done, didn't ye?"

"We did see it done, Sam. You always call on us."

And the coxswain winked in reply to the grin of the L. T. O., and observed that if he'd had his head and hat bashed about by the enemy like that, he'd have put in not only for a new hat—but for a new head. "Any doctor will certify that your brain's afflicted, Sam."

And the gunner's mate good-naturally threw a half-boot at the coxswain, and suggested that, after all, "kinyans" was the main thing.



THE BALL GOWN*

BY LUDOVIC HALÉVY.



WHEN the women of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wrote their memoirs they had the assurance to begin by presenting themselves to their readers after the following fashion :

"My mouth is well-modeled," said the Marquise de Courcelles ; "my lips admirable, teeth like pearls, forehead, cheeks, complexion beautiful, neck slender and graceful, hands divine, arms passable—that is to say, a trifle thin, but I am consoled for that misfortune by possessing '*les plus belles jambes*' in the world!" I am going to follow the example of the marquise. Here is my portrait : Skirt of white satin, trimmed with alternate rows of white blonde lace and shirrings of tulle ; a court train of cherry satin, bordered with a wide flounce of blonde lace, headed with shirrings of tulle, caught back by straps of satin ; two other similar flounces, but narrower, were posed above the wide one. The waist of white satin, trimmed with *revere* covered with tiny ruffles of lace, alternating with shirred tulle, was finished with a *ceinture* and immense butterfly of the cherry satin.

The world was made in six days, and I was made in three, and, nevertheless, I belong to the world, a little world, very complicated, of silk, satin, tulle, blonde lace and shirrings. I wonder if God rested nights when He was creating the world. I do not know, but what I do know is, that the scissors that cut me and the needles that sewed me never ceased work night or day from Monday evening, January 24, to Thursday morning, the 27th. At first the sharp scissors and pricking needles caused me infinite pain, but I soon became oblivious to all that. I began to observe what was going on around me to understand that I was being converted into a gown, and that

* Translated by Ruth Faure, from the French, for Short Stories.

the gown would be a marvel. From time to time M. Worth himself came to see me. "Cut down the waist, lengthen the train, add more shirrings, make the butterfly larger," etc., etc. One thing tormented me: Who was to become my owner? I knew the name, nothing more—the Baroness de Z—. Princess would have suited me better; but, after all, baroness was not bad. My tastes are refined and elevated, and I feared my destination might be some actress or demi-mondaine. It remained to be seen whether the baroness was young, pretty and able to wear me with the carriage and assurance I deserved. I was horribly afraid of falling into the hands of a homely woman—a provincial or an old coquette. How delighted and reassured I was when I saw the baroness! Small, elegant, slender, the figure of a fairy, the shoulders of a goddess, and with all those charms, an audacious, provoking, fearless air, absolutely exquisite. I was displayed on a large couch covered with pearl-gray satin, and was received with every evidence of frankest admiration. M. Worth had the kindness to carry me himself into the room, and it is not often he put himself out to do that. "Very original," cried the baroness, "so novel, but, I fear, very expensive."

"Fifteen hundred francs!"

"Fifteen hundred francs, and I furnished the lace! I would leave you if I did not owe you so much money, for, you know, I do owe you a great deal."

"Oh, no, madam, very little, very little."

"Indeed, I do, a great deal; but we will discuss that some other time."

That same evening I made my *début* in society at the Tuileries. We had, the little baroness and myself, an immense success. When the empress made the tour of the Salon of Diana, distributing gracious words and smiles right and left, she had the goodness to stop before us and say (what seemed to me very spiritual), "Ah, baroness, what a gown, what a gown! It is a dream." The empress wore that evening a gown of white tulle dotted with silver, made over pale green. The waist was trimmed with shoulder straps of sable fur. It was very odd, not without effect, but in rather doubtful taste. We were the centre of an animated group. The new prime minister, Emile Ollivier, was presented to us. We received him coldly. The little baroness did not approve the liberal reforms projected by him, and expected no good results from

them. We talked a long time in the alcove of a window with the Maréchal Lebœuf, the sole subject of that very interesting conversation being the execution of Troppman, it was the sensation of the week. We left at two o'clock, the baroness, myself, and the baron—for there was a baron, although, for the moment, he was completely hidden in one corner of the coupé, under my skirts and train, thrown in a heap over him.

"Acknowledge, Edward," said the little baroness, "that I was beautiful this evening."

"Ravishing!"

"And my gown?"

"Oh, delicious!"

"You say that very indolently, without spirit, without enthusiasm. I understand you perfectly. You think I have been extravagant; but I have not. Do you know what my gown cost me? Four hundred francs, not a sou more!"

Arrived at the house, which was but a short distance from the Tuileries, in the Place Vendôme, the baron went to his rooms and the baroness to hers. While Hermance, the maid, quickly and adroitly unfastened the rosettes and took out the pins, the baroness exclaimed again and again:

"How well this gown suits me, and how well I suit it! I will wear it Thursday evening, Hermance, to the Austrian Embassy. Hold the lamp, I want to see the effect of the butterfly closer—that's right—oh, but it is charming! I am crazy over this gown, Hermance, really crazy."

If the little baroness was in love with me I was madly in love with her. We lived together on the sweetest, most tender, most intimate terms. We understood each other and agreed perfectly. I was fortunate in not having to deal with one of those mechanical dolls, stupidly and brutally laced in a padded corset. Between the little baroness and myself nothing—absolutely nothing but the finest batiste and lace. We had entire confidence and faith in each other. The beauty of the baroness was genuine, solid, without deception of any sort. The following Thursday we went to the Austrian Embassy, and a week later to the Princess Mathilde's; but, alas! the following morning the little baroness said to her maid:

"Hermance, you must put this gown away. I adore it, but it has been seen often enough this winter. Yesterday several persons remarked to me, 'Ah, that is the gown you wore at the Tuileries, that is the gown you wore at the Austrian Em-

bassy.' We must put it away until next winter. 'Au revoir, my dear gown.' And after saying this she kissed me with those beautiful lips of hers, and buried her face in my lace with a tender caress. Ah, how proud and happy I was to be the object of her childlike abandon! I remember that the previous evening she had kissed the baron, but the kiss she bestowed on him was quick and dry, one of those hurried kisses one is in haste to finish, while the kiss she gave me was long, passionate, thrilling. She felt friendship for the baron, but love for me. The baroness was not yet twenty, and coquetry was the foundation of her nature. I tell you this not only to excuse her, but to give you an exact idea of her character. So at noon on the arm of Hermance I made my entry into "la réserve." It was the dormitory of the gowns. An immense room on the third floor, with wardrobes running clear around it, wardrobes of white oak, carefully closed. In the centre of the room was a large ottoman, on which Hermance laid me carefully. Then she opened one after the other the doors of ten or twelve wardrobes. I would not know how to describe to you the quantities of gowns I saw, all fastened by silk cords to large rods. Hermance seemed very much embarrassed.

"'A la réserve,'" she murmured. "'A la réserve'; easy to say, but where is one to find place?" At last she succeeded in making a sort of opening into which I had all the difficulty in the world to slide. Hermance jammed us all in, closed the doors, leaving us in the dark. I found myself between a gown of blue velvet, and one of mauve silk. Toward the end of the month of April the little baroness paid us a visit, and you may imagine what a stir and bustle it caused. The winter gowns were all put away, the spring gowns brought out. The beginning of July another visit, and more changes. All the costumes worn at the races were put away, and those suitable for the summer resorts taken down. I lost my right-hand neighbor, the mauve silk gown; but kept my left-hand neighbor, the blue velvet, a most crabbed, bad-tempered creature, who never ceased to groan and lament her fate. She was constantly saying to me:

"Eh, my dear, you require a great deal of room; take yourself out of the way a little, please."

It must be confessed she had some reason to complain. Three years old, she had never been worn.

"What!" said the baroness, "a high-necked, blue velvet

gown, at my age, and with my neck and arms? 'Jamais!' I would look like a grandmother!"

So the unhappy gown was transferred from the trousseau to the "réserve." Eight or ten days after the departure of the gowns for Baden, we heard a noise, then the sound of voices, and suddenly all the doors were opened wide. It was our little baroness and her friend, the Countess N——.

"Sit down, dear, on that ottoman," said the baroness. "I must look at my gowns. I am horribly upset. I have just this moment arrived from Baden, and leave this evening for Anjou. We can talk while Hermance shows me the gowns. Oh, those Prussians, my dear, are monsters. We were compelled to make our escape, Blanche and I, like thieves—only very simple gowns, Hermance, for morning—and my yachting gowns—yes, my dear, absolutely, as if we had been thieves—they threw stones at us—real stones, in the Lichtenthal Allée, called us rascally Frenchwomen, 'canaille.' The emperor was quite right to declare war against such people! My riding habits, Hermance, the brown one. On the other hand, we can be perfectly tranquil. My husband dined last evening with Guy—you know Guy, Leboeuf's. orderly. Eh, bien, we are ready, perfectly ready—and the Prussians are not at all prepared—very plain, Hermance. You are showing me ball gowns. I have no intention of dancing while this war continues—and then, my dear, it seems that it is absolutely necessary on account of the dynasty. I do not understand just why, but so I am told—there, Hermance, those twelve gowns I have selected will suffice—you say there are thirteen, that will never do; take away the green—better still, add another, the blue gown there, it will be just the thing now. Let us go down, dear."

Thereupon she went away. So war was declared—war with Prussia. I was terribly agitated. I was a French gown—a Bonapartiste. I feared the result for France, for the dynasty, but I consoled myself with thinking of the words of Guy, the orderly. During two months no news, but about the 10th of September, the baroness arrived with Hermance. She was very pale, my little baroness, very pale and very unhappy.

"Show me only dark gowns, Hermance, and black—all the gowns left that were made for me when Aunt Pauline died—there ought to be quite a number—you understand I am too sad——"

"Still, if madam, intends remaining a long time in England?"

"Oh, as long as the Republic lasts."

"That may be very long."

"How can it last? You have curious ideas, Hermance. Who could have told you such absurd things?"

"It seems to me, in madame's place, I would, by way of precaution, take with me some winter gowns—some dressy gowns."

"Dressy gowns! Where is your head? I shall not go anywhere while in England, alone, without my husband, who remains here in the national guard."

"Nevertheless, should madame desire to visit the emperor and empress in England?"

"Certainly, Hermance, I shall do so."

"I felt sure madame's heart would prompt her to."

"You are quite right, Hermance; add several evening gowns."

"Would not madame like the gown of white satin last ordered?"

"Oh, no, not that," she cried, "it would be a painful souvenir for the empress, who remarked it at the last ball given at the Tuileries; and then the voyage would ruin it. My favorite gown, will I ever wear it again?"

You understand now why I did not go to England, and why I was imprisoned in Paris during the siege. From the few remarks we had overheard, we had rather a clear idea of the situation. The empire was overthrown, the republic proclaimed. The republic—among us there were some old family laces that had seen the first republic—that of '93, the Terror! What stories they told us! The truth is, these old laces were not at all displeased at the downfall of the empire, for they were all either Legitimists or Orléanists. Quite near me, on a skirt of currant-colored satin, there were four flounces of guipure that had had the honor of being present at the coronation of Charles V. They did not conceal their joy at the news, and cried:

"The Bonapartes brought about this invasion, and the invasion will restore the Bourbons. Vive Henri V.!" One thought absorbed us all: Would we continue to be "*à la mode*"? The most of us were very gay and striking, so much so, in fact, that we felt quite uneasy. There were three or four serious gowns, and they joined the old laces and cried:

"At last there will be an end to this carnival—this masquerade of an empire. Republic or monarchy, it matters not to us, we are always in perfect taste."

We all felt that they had reason to speak so! From the month of September to the month of February we remained locked up in our wardrobes, where we wrangled and listened to the cannons, and were ignorant of all that was taking place in Paris. Toward the middle of the month of February all the doors were thrown open. The little baroness—it was the little baroness:

"Ah," she cried, "my gowns, my precious gowns, do I really see them once more? How happy I am!"

We were unable to say so, but we, too, were rejoiced indeed to see our dear little baroness.

"Let us see, Hermance, what we can find appropriate. What shall I take to Bordeaux? After such terrible disasters one must wear serious, quiet gowns."

"Unfortunately, madame has not many such."

"I beg your pardon, Hermance, I have some—this one, that one, the blue velvet that I have never worn."

My neighbor was taken down, and speedily made her *début* in the world. The baroness did not wait for Hermance, but searched for herself in the wardrobe.

"Nothing! nothing!" she cried, "that I can wear, nothing that would harmonize with the politics in fashion at Bordeaux. I will be compelled to order some Republican gowns—moderately Republican, but, nevertheless, Republican."

The little baroness went away and returned a month later with Hermance. Hermance was invaluable; she possessed genuine merit and taste, and was highly appreciated by her mistress. More consultations followed their return.

"Hermance," asked the baroness, "what shall I wear to Versailles? I think it time to come out a little. There are to be dinners and receptions at M. Thiers, then the princes are coming. We will be in a transition state for awhile, and, you understand, Hermance, the gowns I will need."

"Perfectly, madame; light colors, pearl-gray, mauve, violet, lilac."

"Quite right, Hermance. You are really a treasure; you understand me perfectly."

The little baroness left for Versailles with about twenty "*robes de transition*." We began to feel hopeful. Madame

had commenced at Bordeaux with serious gowns, had continued with light colors at Versailles. Versailles was evidently but a halting place between Bordeaux and Paris. The dear baroness would soon return to Paris, and once there we felt sure we would not have to remain imprisoned in our wardrobes. But, alas! for our hopes, a few days after her departure for Versailles we heard violent firing under our windows, in the Place Vendôme. Was there another riot? Another revolution? After this silence for an entire week, then the firing recommenced more violent than before. Was the conflict with the Prussians beginning over again? Was it another siege?

The days passed, the cannonading continued. At last one morning there was a great uproar in our court, cries, menaces, swearing. The noises became more distinct—blows on the doors of our wardrobes. When they yielded we saw eight or ten men, unshaved, dirty, ragged, in their midst a woman, a little brunette, rather nice, upon my word, but dressed in the most extraordinary manner. A black dress, the skirt very short, little boots, with red ribbon bows, a round hat of gray felt, with a large red plume, and a red scarf across her shoulders. It was a curious style, but not without effect.

"Oh, oh," she cried, "what lovely gowns! Just take them, sergeant, and carry them to my apartment."

The men fell upon us with a sort of fury. We felt ourselves dishonored by their soiled and vulgar hands.

"Do not spoil them, citizens!" cried the little woman. "Make them into bundles and put them in the artillery wagon."

The little woman with the red plume in her hat proved to be the wife of one of the generals of the Commune. We were destined to remain official gowns. Official under the empire, official under the Commune! Madame examined each one of us in turn, and I was honored with an attention and admiration quite special.

"Do look, Emile" (Emile was the general) "this is the most beautiful and chic of the whole lot. I will keep it to wear at the Tuileries."

What irony of fate! I was to go to the Tuileries! Such a commotion and lamentation as this news caused in the sort of alcove into which we had been jammed like old rags was never heard before.

Madame, it seems, went out every evening, and never wore

the same gown twice. Each day my poor comrades described to me their adventures of the previous evening. One had dined with the Citizen Raoul Régault at the Prefecture of Police, another had occupied the box of the empress at the Comédie Française, where *Andromache* was being played, etc., etc. At last my turn came, the 17th of May was the day of the grand concert at the Tuileries. Oh, my dear little baroness, what has become of you? Where are your soft skirts of muslin and lace, and the supple corsets of satin? Madame la Générale wore calico skirts and crinoline—and such a corset! Fancy my poor skirts of lace and satin over such abominations! As to the waist—I blush to think of it, much too tight at the waist and too loose—but really I cannot explain! At ten o'clock in the evening I ascended the grand stairway of the Tuileries, in the midst of a dense and common crowd. One of the general's aide-de-camps vainly tried to make a passage for us.

"Make way! make way!" he cried, "for the wife of a general!"

The crowd simply laughed at her, and showed us no consideration. I felt the heavy boots stamping over my train, and the spurs tearing my delicate laces. The bones of madame's corsets hurt me dreadfully. At midnight I returned to the wretched apartment of madame in rags and tatters—soiled, dishonored, covered with spots of wine, tobacco and mud. A horrible maid brutally tore me from the shoulders of her mistress. She asked:

"Well, madame, was it nice?"

"No, *Victoire*," she responded, "the crowd was too mixed. But make haste, tear the gown off. I know where to get plenty more at the same price."

And I was thrown like a rag in a corner, on a pile of gowns composed of all the ball gowns of the little baroness. One morning, three or four days later, the aide-de-camp arrived in hot haste, crying:

"The *Versaillais*! the *Versaillais* are in Paris!"

Madame immediately donned a sort of military costume, took two revolvers, filled them with cartridges, attached them to a black belt she had on.

"Where is the general?" she asked.

"At the Tuileries."

"Very well, I will go there with you."

She put on the gray felt hat, posing it jauntily on one side, and departed. The noise of the cannonade and firing increased rapidly, and drew nearer. Evidently the fighting was close to us. The next day the general and his wife returned, but in what a state! Out of breath, terrified, gloomy, their clothes white with dust, their hands and faces black with powder. The general was wounded in the left hand. It had been bound up with a handkerchief, which was saturated with blood.

"Does your arm pain you?" asked madame.

"It stings a little, that is all."

"Did they follow us?"

"Yes; I think so."

"Listen! surely I hear voices—cries! Look out of the window, but do not let them see you."

"The Zouaves are there."

"Close all the doors—load the revolvers, I cannot with my wounded arm—it is stupid, this wound."

"You are very pale."

"Because I am losing so much blood."

"They are coming up the stairs."

"Come with me to the alcove. We can place ourselves on the gowns."

"They are here."

"Give me a revolver."

The door was broken open violently. The balls fell in showers about us. The general fell heavily on the couch made of silk, satin and laces. Three or four men threw themselves on madame, who fought, bit, struggled, and cried, "Assassins! assassins!" A soldier tore off the cord of a bell and bound her hands with it, and they carried her away as if she had been a package. She continued to repeat in a hoarse voice: "Assassins! assassins!" The soldiers approached the alcove and regarded the general.

"He will need nothing more in this world, let us go!"

They departed. We remained there two days, crushed under that body, and saturated with blood. At last a man who was called M. le Commissaire arrived. He wore a tri-colored scarf.

"That body has been forgotten," he said. "It must be taken away at once."

They tried to lift it, but found the hands rigid in death, grasping the red butterfly of my dress so tightly they were al-

most compelled to break the fingers before I could be released. The commissaire seemed curiously interested in the pile of gay rags on which the general had lain. My waist was picked up.

"Here is a mark," he said to one of his men, "a mark inside of the waist. The name of the maker and a number. We may be able to find out where these gowns came from. Wrap this waist in a paper, I will take it with me."

So I was done up in an old number of the Official Journal of the Commune. The next day we went to M. Worth's, the Commissaire and I. The conversation was not long.

"This gown was made by you?"

"Yes, yes; here is the name."

"And for whom was it made?"

"No. 18,223. Wait one moment, I will consult my books."

Five minutes later he returned and said to the Commissaire:

"It was made for the Baroness Z—— eighteen months ago, and has never been paid for."





THE STORY OF A CHASE*



HERE were dead leaves underfoot, but overhead the trees wore crimson and russet gold. There were deep lanes under the trees, but beyond stretched open moorland, swelling to the horizon. The wind shook the trees with rustlings as of silk, with clamorous whispers and gasps, rising and falling, but never quite still. But it surged over the moor with the rush and swirl of surf, and then there were silences in sharp contrast, while the clouds drove overhead, gathered and massed and trailed away, leaving wide blue gaps. And, from time to time, there came a glint of sunlight to lie across the moors.

The day was typical of the times, for it was the second year of the Civil War in England.

In the principal street of a small post-town, at the door of its principal hostelry, a horse stood waiting, tossing its head fretfully at the rough caress of the wind which whisked its mane to and fro, laying back its ears at the roar of the gale in them, fidgeting impatiently, sidling, starting, stamping—a brown mare, with a coat like satin, and limbs of satin and steel, with a head like a deer, and fine, full nostrils, quivering with eagerness and impatience. It was describing a circle round the man who was holding it, causing a wary falling back amongst a knot of spectators near the door, when a step sounded on the stair within, and the little ears shot forward, with a low whinny, at the sight of the lad who cleared the last steps at a bound, and came out into the wild autumn morning. A boy with a gay,

*From "Cassell's Magazine."

handsome face, boyishly light-hearted; but holding in the curves of mouth and chin the promise of a determination and resourcefulness more than boyish; with bright blue eyes, keen behind their laughter; slim, and of only just middle height, but lithe and wiry. He swept off his hat, nodding lightly to the group outside. The mare began to sidle toward him at once, and taking the reins from the man holding her, he pulled the soft muzzle stretched out to him up to his face, and kissed it with a laugh. With his arm across her neck, he turned and spoke to some one who had followed him out to the door of the hostelry, a tall, gray-haired man.

"I'll do my best, sir."

The other answered him, with a kindly look in his eyes:

"For that, my lad, I'd give ye credit whate'er should befall."

The color came into the lad's face. "Thank ye, colonel. I vow I will."

The other proceeded to give him some final instructions.

"And have a care of thyself, lad," he concluded, with a hand on the lad's shoulder, as he turned to re-enter the house. "There be just one or two we could better spare than thee."

"Thank ye," said the lad again, and he seemed about to repeat his former promise, but checked himself; but, then, with a laugh, and eyes full of mischief, quoted himself mockingly, "I'll do my best, colonel." The other shook his head laughingly, and took his departure. The boy looked round at the group in front of him.

"Just one or two, here!" he said, nodding at them impertinently. There was a playful unsheathing of rapiers. "Nay, nay, in the face of the colonel's expressed command I cannot pleasure ye, fire-eaters that ye are. Tilt ye at each others' inconsiderable throats, and let out some of the bile that inspires ye." He sprang nimbly into the saddle, and wheeled the mare. "Keep ye, gallants, in all humility till I return. S—steady there"—as the mare went up the street like an india-rubber ball. "Have a care for my valuable neck."

"Keep her to that, Nick, and I'll warrant ye safe from the Croppies' bullets at e'en five yards," shouted one man after him.

"From aught but a broken neck," jeered another. The lad turning in his saddle called back:

"From envy and malice, Dick Lacy, the Lord deliver thee. Pluck up heart, man; didst not quite fall off the last time thy

jade coughed? Nay, on the king's business I accept no cartels, but I'll ride a tilt with thee on my return, and thou shalt be tied into thy saddle an thou wilt."

"'Sdeath, thou mayst be riding a tilt with thy sponsor and namesake, Old Nick, before then, an' thou chance to fall foul of his darlings, the long-eared rout, and fail to show them a clean pair of heels."

"Faith! he will be the better, and thou the worse, of a very notable lesson in the gentle art of equitation, should it so fall. But I'd back the mare to show a clean pair of heels to Old Nick himself. So ye would do well to set to and practice thy horsemanship, Dick. Hey, Dick"—he pulled the mare almost on to her haunches for a moment—"canst have my sorrel while I'm away. I would not have thee say but thou hadst all reasonable advantages." (Dick Lacy had recently lost a horse in a brush with the enemy.) "And if Old Nick cannot wait longer for my company, ye can keep it to practice on against the time we meet again. But the mare and I go to the devil together, if it so be."

He disappeared in a cloud of dust, followed by the ringing laughs and jeers of the knot by the door. He was well known and well liked. He and his mare had pulled more than one man out of a tight corner, and his high spirits and good-nature made him a general favorite.

And so crimson and russet and gold came into the lane between the steep banks under the trees, came with a "cling" of iron-shod hoofs, trampling the dead leaves underfoot, and waking little whirls and eddies among them, with a glitter of steel, and a steel-like gleam in blue eyes, which glanced hither and thither—under the trees, down the by-paths, into the open distance. Gay blue eyes, with a challenge in them—as in the alertness of the boyish figure, in the hand which never strayed far from the holster, in the shortened reins, the nice touch on the brown mare's mouth, ready to stop her or to let her dash into her full stride at a moment's notice.

He was humming a gay little tune under his breath, with a smile on his lips, when suddenly the tune broke off in a sharp indrawn breath, and in a lightning-flash the young face changed, flared into defiance.

There was a rush of sound and air and motion. Dead leaves whirled in clouds under the iron shoes as the mare bounded forward under the spur. Dead leaves rose and scattered under

other iron shoes. The ring of hoofs had its echo flung back from the other end of the lane, and the gleam of steel met the gleam of steel between the steep banks under the trees. But the lad on the mare was alone, while half a dozen Roundhead troopers filled the narrow track on the other side.

The discovery, and the subsequent dash toward a common goal (the path which cut into the lane midway between them) seemed almost simultaneous on both sides; but there was a second's hesitation, an involuntary check, a little inevitable jostling among the troopers' horses, and on the lad's part not a second lost. The mare gained the outlet first. The slope was in her favor, her own superior fleetness, too, and the lightness of her rider. But his bullet was only just in time, as he swerved into the path leading on to the moors, to intercept one from the foremost trooper, and a shower of bullets sang after him with high-buzzing drone as he turned. Half standing in his stirrups he rode for the open country—rode for life and trust, with his teeth set, catching his breath, but with a flush on his cheek and his blue eyes gleaming. He was such a boy—excitement and danger were the salt of life to him. Only the thought of the dispatches he bore sobered him with a sense of responsibility—brought a stern curve to his lips and a line between his brows at the sound and thrill of those thundering hoofs behind him. Fortunately, the path was full of sharp curves, so that he was screened from his pursuers at a very short distance. He stood up, easing the mare, and she swept down the dip of the path with a burst which carried her far up the opposite rise on to the moor. He sat down in the saddle and steadied her then, and riding slantwise up the crest was able, without losing ground, to throw a glance back at the mouth of the path he had quitted. In a moment he saw one trooper burst from it, closely followed by a second; then, after an interval, by a third. He was over the crest and speeding down the opposite side before any more came into sight, but looking back as he came again on to higher ground, he saw them all—three first, and two behind—dotting the slope. He was within range of bullets, but he trusted to the pace to prevent them from using their weapons, or at least to impair their aim. And the pace was terrific; it roused a sense of wild exhilaration in him. The rush of the wind made him catch his breath, and sang in his ears with the hum of vibrating chords.

A wide, deep ditch yawned in front of them, and toward this

he shaped his course. The mare quickened her pace and took it with an effort, the bank crumbling under her hoofs. Behind him presently he heard a splash, and the sound of struggling. His face broke into an irrepressible smile of boyish elation. He did not turn and wave his hat ironically, though he would have liked to; but he patted the little creature under him, exclaiming: "Hey for King Charles! Bravo, my maidie!" His color rose jubilantly.

But when at the end of a few more moments he found time to review the situation, he wondered whether they had flung themselves on the pursuit of a chance "Malignant," or had caught wind of his errand as the bearer of more or less important dispatches. A stern chase and a long one, in the latter case! At the next opportunity he looked round again. They were riding in the same order, with a suggestion of dogged determination about them which he was quick to recognize. He faced round in the saddle again with a dry little laugh, squaring his shoulders with something of their own suggestion of obstinacy, thrusting his feet home in the stirrups, and narrowing his eyes against the wind which beat sharply in them; but they were bright and confident still, and he leaned forward with a pat to his mare, and a light-hearted word of encouragement, as he settled himself in the saddle, throwing keen glances ahead.

Twenty minutes later, breaking from a coppice, he saw the clustered roofs of a village in the dip below him, and the white ribbon of the highway in front; and behind, the sweep of the moors, barren of figures for the moment, and his face expressed a resolution more than tinged with elation.

He turned on to the road as the foremost horseman loomed up against the skyline a mile and a half away. But, before he had gone a hundred yards, the mare made a sudden stumble, and something ran sharply on the hard surface.

She had cast a shoe!

He jumped down with an oath. The smithy lay a couple of hundred yards further on, just above the village, and he led her there at a limping trot. The smith ran out with a readiness which seemed to suggest a grasp of the situation. He asked no questions, but took the bridle out of his hand, and set to work without delay. It only remained to the other to possess his soul in such patience as he could command, which in truth was very little. Outwardly he was calm enough, though, as

he stood beside the mare with his hand on her neck, he stroked and patted the little creature as though it was she who was maddening at the delay, she who could hardly force herself to stand still. He who had faced far greater odds—with his back against a wall—undaunted, felt overwhelmingly helpless, felt like a trapped animal. He could not keep his eyes from the swelling uplands where the figures shifted in and out, but always nearer and nearer. Every minute dragged and yet flew.

It was with a rebound of spirits so great as to send his mood swinging back to almost reckless confidence, that he sprang at last into the saddle and felt the mare take the bit in her teeth. All would go well now!—though he could see the troopers' faces set and dogged, though he could catch the muffled drumming of the hoofs on the heath and grass, and the next moment their matchlocks cracked sharply and a couple of bullets actually grazed his cheek and the mare's quarter, making her bound forward. He went down the slope with a smile on his lips and a bold defiance in his eyes. All would go well now!

The slope, which was abrupt, hid him from them. He laughed scornfully when two more loud reports heralded the advent of more bullets, which flew high above his head.

"They are lavish of their powder, the knaves. Do they lose heart?" was his thought. And then—even as he flashed into the little village street, scattering knots of idlers whom the firing seemed to have drawn out of doors—with a sudden misgiving inspired by, or confirmed by (both so nearly simultaneous that he could not have told which), an impression of certain figures who were not yokels, and the next moment, by the sight of a group of horses ready bridled and saddled by a drinking trough:

"Is it a signal?"

He was prepared, when an unfriendly hand made a snatch at his bridle. The butt-end of his pistol brought down on the man's wrist freed him; the bullet was for the assailant who charged him with drawn sword, and the impetus of the gallop rolled over a third; and then the narrow street was left behind, and with his teeth clenched and the unconscious oath still ringing between them, with his breath coming unevenly, and one hand dyed red from a cut, he was out on the broad highway.

Behind him the ring of hoofs dwindled suddenly, then broke out with a louder, fresher sound. A single horse followed him

on to the road. Behind it again there came the sudden check, the renewed fall of hoofs, and again, and again. It had puzzled him at first, but he grasped its meaning in a moment. They were changing their horses, leaving their tired cattle behind, and resuming the chase on fresh animals. It turned the odds against him he realized with a sinking of the heart, and then with a sudden fierce sense of injury, and a freakish pity and concern, not for himself or even the failure of his mission, but for the game little mare. That she should have struggled so gallantly only to be beaten in the end by a flout of fate!

"A scurvy trick of the jade Fortune. But we'll fight it to the end, my sweetheart," he told her; and even now he could not think of that end as a foregone conclusion. She was going so well; the short rest had refreshed her, and the sound of the galloping hoofs behind excited her. His mood was illogically compounded of hope and defiance. Surely in the end luck would befriend him, but, if not, to the devil with it—he would conquer in spite of it. None the less he felt a personal animus against his pursuers which had been wanting up to now—a sense of unfairness in the conditions of the struggle. There was a harder set about his mouth, and the light in his eyes was fiercely resentful as well as determined. He remembered with a certain savage satisfaction the loss he had inflicted on the troopers, and told himself there would be more bloodshed before he was taken. And in the thought, after a while, a dogged good-humor came back to him.

Half an hour later he drew rein on the spur of a hill. The mare was breathing hard, and her coat was black with sweat; underneath it the veins stood out like a network of ropes. She strained at the reins, stretching her neck and blowing through her nostrils. Her rider, standing in his stirrups, threw impatient glances over his shoulder, and anxious ones ahead. Some four miles off a house stood boldly up above its clustered trees, and toward it his looks were directed. He had heard that it was occupied by a small troop of Royalists, and now it held his best hope of safety. He shortened the reins after a moment or two and urged the mare forward. The blue eyes were stern now and he rode with clenched teeth. He handled the pistols reflectively for a moment, looking over his shoulder, and then slipped them back into the holster, having satisfied himself that they were loaded and in working order.

He broke into a gallop again on the level.

Two miles, over moorland interspersed with low scrub and stony ground on a tired animal ; but the troopers' heavy horses also were under the necessity of picking their way. The distance remained the same.

Then on a road, where the mare, grateful for the change, went a trifle more freely at first. But the fresher horses, breaking from the uneven ground, seized and held their greater advantage—a mile, with the distance lessening between them.

Then the tiny hamlet, overshadowed by the house on the hill. Up the steep little street, saved from bullets by its windings—the mare beginning to roll in her stride, yet still struggling on—across the village green, and there above the wall the old park trees were leaning ; but the massive gates denied admittance to one who could not tarry to give credentials. Beyond them his quick desperate glance lit on a breach in the wall, showing that here, too, the war had come. It had been roughly repaired to a certain height, but a desperate man on a good horse might just manage it. He at least must make the attempt. He turned the mare at it, and for the first time in her life struck in the spurs mercilessly. She answered with a sob of distress, rose at it, caught her forefeet hard, and turned over.

He had slipped his feet out of the stirrups, and fell clear. He was up in a moment, but the mare lay still !

He stood beside her, stunned by this final failure, with tears of rage and despair in his eyes. At the gates the troopers were thundering. And then suddenly, as they began to open, the memory of boyish triumphs in fleetness of foot came to his assistance. He must make his feet serve him now as they had never served him before. Turning from her, he plunged into the labyrinth of trees to give himself a better chance with the horses, who would not turn so quickly and easily as he would. He had thrust his pistols into his belt ; he held his naked sword in his hand. He was conscious as he ran of two figures dropping on to the grass behind him, and of the horses sweeping up the avenue, to turn him if the others failed to run him down or to stop him with a bullet. Stiff at first and shaken by the fall, he quickly warmed to the run and outdistanced the troopers.

After a while he flung away the scabbard by his side. Then, the strain on his heart beginning to tell, he threw away his sword, reserving only the pistols.

Twisting among the trunks, bruising himself, tearing his

face, hands, garments, he went on. Once, catching his foot in a trailing creeper, he fell. He lunged on to his feet again, and staggered headlong for the next few paces. Once, reeling suddenly, he clutched at a trunk, and, leaning against it, fought for a little breath, while he waited for the nearest man to show himself, to fire. He did not wait to see the effect of his shot, but broke into a run again.

He burst at last into the broad sweep of the avenue, just below the house, firing wildly at any shadow in the trees, chiefly with the idea of arousing the attention of those within, of drawing them to meet him. Headlong, blindly, wildly he ran; staggering at every step, reeling like a drunken man, still keeping his feet, he went on. Livid, with blue lines round his lips, and his eyes—those gay blue eyes—misty and bloodshot. He saw through all their mist and glaze a blurred vision of figures running to meet him, with a glint of arms in the sunlight, and was conscious of the troopers' horses flashing into the avenue. Still staggering, only mindful of the hoofs behind him, of the broad stretch in front, of the feet that refused to carry him further, he stumbled forward and flung the roll of dispatches as far as he could.

They fell just at the top of the flight of steps. He, with his hands at his breast, clutching at the balustrade, sank on his knees at the bottom.

On his knees, on the last step—on his knees—then, lower, slipping down till he lay huddled up against it—fighting for air in choking sobs. Fighting no longer for king, for loyalty, for honor—drifting into oblivion of all these things, of the hoofs that came slowly and confidently up the avenue, of the men who ran forward to pick up the dispatches—and received them with bewildered looks.

And before the foremost trooper had reached him he had drifted beyond!

The horses stood still, with tired strainings at the reins loose on their necks at last, with tired shiftings of the heavy bits in their mouths, with heaving flanks and nostrils distended. One of them, stretching down to the ground, sniffed at the crumpled velvet and lace huddled so quietly there against the step; sniffed curiously round it, paused at a root of grass upsprung in the ground beside it, pulled listlessly at the green blades, and moved a little further on.

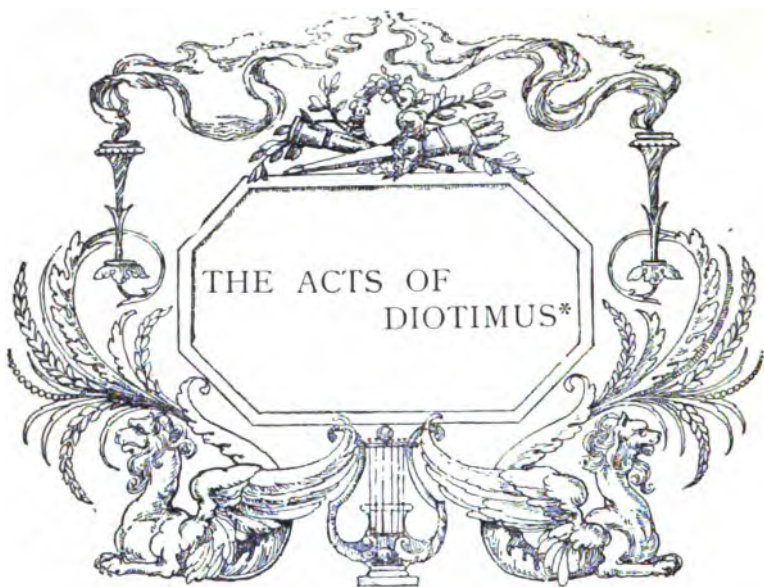
The wind whispered through the trees with rustlings as of

silk, but it stirred up the avenue, over the figure, with gathering sighs; over the figure all unwitting that it died in a supreme effort to fling its master's message—at its master's enemies' feet.

For garrisons change from day to day in war-time, and it has chanced to more than one to find enemies where they looked for friends.

And so Dick Lacy kept the sorrel.





BY JULES PHILIPPE HEUZEY

Famous Story Series.

THE good tidings which the first confessors had announced in Aquitaine was like the fruitful seed of the Scripture, which brings forth an hundred fold. Carried by the breath of love which gave it life, it spread as far as the lands which border the ocean and where dwelt nomad shepherds. It was Julius Gallus, an Arverne noble, grammarian at Rome, till the day of his conversion to the religion of the Christ, who had preached the gospel to the shepherds of the plains. These humble men, touched by the word of Him who is lowly of heart, received baptism. Afterward infirmities had prevented Gallus from continuing his mission further, and he had remained among his brethren, the shepherds.

These shepherds led the peaceful life of those who do not taste the flesh of animals. They revered their spiritual father. On his part, Julius Gallus enjoyed the innocence of his humble

* Translated by M. B. Stewart, from the French, for Short Stories.

flock; the artless language of these simple folk pleased him who had been skillful in the elegances of speech. He had no tent of his own; each night he sought shelter with one of those whom he had led to the life of grace.

Above all these families of shepherds Gallus cherished that of Fortunat, because of its ardent piety. The eldest of Fortunat's three children, Gratian, was reader, and Gallus was soon to ordain him deacon.

On this evening, at the last glimmer of daylight, as each shepherd had just returned to his flock, a stranger arrived at the tents which were at the eastern side of the plain.

He was a man of fifty years, of medium stature, and, although he was clothed in a cloak of coarse stuff, there was in his movements a harmony which rustic life cannot develop. And notwithstanding the humility of his speech, his hand, at times, betrayed an ancient habit of command. Deep furrows hollowed his brow, the holy joy of the brethren seemed not to dwell in his soul.

"Hail, in Jesus Christ, my brothers!" he exclaimed to the first shepherds whom he met.

"The peace of the Lord be with thee!" answered the shepherds. "Thou seemest weary; enter beneath our tent and eat and sleep."

"Thanks. I would, before taking any repose, see Julius Gallus, your spiritual father."

"I will lead thee to him," said one of the shepherds.

And he departed with the unknown.

Night descended rapidly. The stifling heat of an August day was abating. Cool breezes from the ocean, whose vanishing line could be divined in the west, refreshed the air. The sheep and oxen, roused from their languor, began to browse on the sparse grass of the sandy plain. Here and there a shepherd stood leaning on his crook, motionless, with eyes turned toward the setting sun, whose diminishing light still separated the horizon from the down, dotted here and there with dark pools, and the only flowers on which were the yellow blossoms of the furze. At intervals, a song greeted the ears of the stranger. A young man was improvising a hymn to the glory of God. The song arose in the air, even to the stars, more numerous each moment. At times also a shepherd fell upon his knees and remained in ecstacy with folded arms. Before the tents families were talking pleasantly.

The stranger saw that the spirit of God dwelt in this barren corner of the earth.

"Oh!" he thought, "how perfect is their peace!"

"I see Julius Gallus," spoke the shepherd, "he is sitting before the tent of Fortunat, with the family of our brother around him."

At the same moment the eldest son of Fortunat, who had seen the two men, ran to them.

"Brethren, I salute ye!" he said.

"The blessing of God be on thee!" answered the stranger.

"Brother Gratian," said the shepherd, "our brother, whom I am guiding, desires to see Julius Gallus. Wilt thou lead him?"

"Follow me, brother," said Gratian.

The guide of the stranger turned away.

"My father," said Gratian to Julius Gallus, when they were near to him, "this traveler is one of our brothers in Jesus Christ—he is seeking thee."

The man of God arose, and with him the family of Fortunat.

"Blessed be God who hath sent thee!" he said to the traveler.

"Dost thou not know me?" asked the stranger.

Julius Gallus approached him, and in the darkness tried to distinguish his features. He exclaimed:

"In truth, art thou not Eudemos of Athens?"

"Yes; I am that Eudemos, once so glorious because of the victories which his chariots carried away in the arena; Eudemos, the companion of thy guilty pleasures when thou camest into Greece."

"Praised be God who hath touched our hearts!" exclaimed Gallus. "Brother Eudemos, thy coming overwhelms me with joy."

And the two men embraced with tears in their eyes.

"How long since thou hast been led to the knowledge of the truth?" continued Gallus.

"Lo, it is fifteen years since I received baptism from the hands of Tertullian. I was at Carthage with one of my friends, the Lord inspired me to go and hear that saint of God, and the light entered my soul. I returned to Greece, where I remained for ten years; then, five years ago, I came with eleven other brothers to join Iræneus, the holy martyr of Lugdunum. At present I am on my way to carry the word of God to the Vascons. At Lemovicum they spoke to me of thee, Julius Gallus.

The perfume of thy virtues is spread afar in the countries around."

"I am but an unworthy servant of Christ," murmured Gallus, bowing his head.

"Hence," added Eudemos, "I did not wish to pass by this province without embracing thee."

"Thou shalt sleep beneath my tent, brother," said Fortunat; "sit thee down, my wife will give thee of the milk of our sheep."

"My father," said Ancilla, the eldest daughter of the shepherd, "let me wash thy feet, weary with thy journey."

Each one was anxious to serve Eudemos. His weariness was extreme, and he accepted gratefully the cares of the charitable brethren.

"The kingdom of God is at hand in the land of the Gauls," said he to Gallus; "the number of the brethren increases from day to day."

"This assurance fills my heart with a flood of joy. 'The gods have deserted their temples and their altars,' says the poet. We, on the contrary, say, 'The false gods see their temples and their altars abandoned.'"

"But times of trial, too, are at hand," resumed Eudemos. "The Beast, drunken with blood; still demands drink."

"I alone remain of the twelve brethren who came out of Greece; all, following the example of their father, Iræneus, have confessed Christ. Everywhere, on my way, I have seen our brothers persecuted. At Gergovia the prisons are overflowing with the faithful; at Lemovicum, a deacon was burned alive under my eyes; at Burdigala, a child smaller than that one," said he, pointing to Lois, the youngest daughter of Fortunat, "thrown into the air by the horns of a furious bull, did not breathe a complaint."

"I, too, will be a deacon," thought Gratian. And Lois, the frail adolescent, sighed with a voice of ecstasy: "Blessed are they who die for their faith!"

Julius Gallus, who regarded her, saw that an aureole shone around the head of the child. He knew by this sign that God reserved for Lois the martyr's palm, and he praised the Lord.

He alone was witness of the transfiguration of Lois, for Fortunat and his family had their eyes fixed on Eudemos.

Eudemos no longer spoke. He sat motionless with bowed head. Then Fortunat thought that the two saints would be

pleased to talk alone, and he withdrew into his tent with his family.

When his hosts were gone, Eudemos repeated in a hollow voice:

"Blessed are they who die for their faith!"

"Is it the longing for martyrdom which fills thy brow with care?" asked Gallus. "Thou knowest, nevertheless, that the Lord forbids us to seek death, even the death of saints, for we should not hasten the hour which He has fixed."

"I do not seek martyrdom; I deplore only that it is denied me. We were twelve—I alone remain. When I came to Gergovia, the crowd cried in my path:

"The Christian to the lion!"

"I was released without appearing before the tribunal. At Pictavium I buried the bodies of my martyred brethren in spite of the command of the prefect. I was not molested. Yes, God wills that I shall live—it is my expiation."

"Thou speakest of expiation; thou, the ardent disciple of Christ! The stains of thy past life have been washed away by the waters of baptism."

"Listen, Julius Gallus," said Eudemos. "I must confide to thee the secret that oppresses me. Thy soul pleases God, and thy light must have increased with the years. Before our brother Fortunat and his family, I should not have spoken, for it is written, 'Thou shalt not offend one of these little ones.'"

"What I have delayed to tell thee, when I told thee of my conversion, is that immediately after being ordained deacon I was acclaimed Bishop of Orchomena, in Beotia. I had the joy of making innumerable conversions during my pontificate. From day to day, the number of worshipers diminished in the temple of Dionysos, who was honored in that land. The Christians were so numerous that we dared to assemble in the daytime, in a field on the outskirts of the city. It was on the abandoned stone of an altar once consecrated to Dionysos that I offered the holy sacrifice—the cross arose where once an unclean idol stood.

"The Roman authorities did not persecute us. The prefect himself was my disciple in secret.

"I had been five years at Orchomena, when a new priest came to the temple of Dionysos. Diotimus was his name. I met him one day in one of the streets of the city. He was young, and rich in all the vain advantages to which my ances-

tors attached so great a value. Homer would have called him 'Diotimus of the fair cheeks'; he had rosy cheeks and a white brow; his mien was modest, and in his eyes glowed the flame of a pure enthusiasm.

"I felt at once the keen desire to have this young man among the number of the neophytes. It seemed to me that his soul must be acceptable to God. Hence, how great was my joy, soon after this meeting, one evening when I was expounding the Holy Scriptures, to recognize Diotimus disguised in the tunic of a laborer. He sat on a stone, not far from me. In my pious desire to lead him to a knowledge of the true God, I spoke with the most ardent zeal, and when I commented on the passion of our Lord all the faithful wept with pity and love.

"The young priest gave no sign of sorrow. He heard me to the end, and withdrew from the faithful. On the following days I did not see Diotimus at our meetings, and I prayed God to enlighten his reason, and open his heart.

"One evening, as I was walking to the field where we held our meetings, and as I was reflecting upon the mysteries of our redemption, I saw at the west of this field, under a clump of plane trees, a somewhat numerous group of men. Diotimus was in their midst, speaking. I at once bade one of the catechumen to go and listen to this priest, and to report his words to me. Soon afterward the man rejoined me and told me that Diotimus was speaking of Dionysos, praising his cult, exalting the beauty of his religion, and recalling the Orcho-menans to his abandoned altars:

"I was confounded by the boldness of this priest, who dared to come to near to the altar of the true God to preach the impostures of his idol. In my exhortation of that day I dwelt upon the snares which the devil offers to our curiosity, and I forbade the faithful to go under any pretext whatever to hear Diotimus.

"But I knew that, on that very day, several of them were added to the hearers of the priest of Dionysos. Members of their families still devoted to the cult of the false gods, it seems, had attracted them. Two of these neophytes came no more to my preaching. My sorrow was keen, for the festival of Easter was near, when they were to receive baptism. From day to day the crowd increased around Diotimus. Many Christians, whose idolatrous relatives listened to the preaching of the

young priest, told me of the admiration of the pagans for his eloquence.

"I resolved to go myself to hear his discourse, and, disguised as he had been to hear me, I mingled with the rabble of idolaters. I had the sorrow to find there several of the brethren, come in spite of my warnings. God, without doubt, had permitted this temptation for my church in order that the good seed might be separated from the chaff. I saw that the priest of Dionysos possessed the gift of speech. It escaped from his lips like a clear flood, it struck like a hammer, it inflamed like the noonday sun. He was the Apollo of the poet, 'who darts his bolts afar.' His voice was now grave and sonorous, now low as the sound of the rushes in the breath of the south wind. I detested this Diotimus; his multiple gifts seemed to me so many wiles of Satan; his beauty appeared to me a rose with its heart blackened by the hideous worm.

"I passed the night in prayer and tears. I wept over those who had let themselves be taken with the snares of the enemy. I asked of our Lord to grant me the gift of eloquence, that by my word He might confound the lies of Diotimus.

"Alas! I was not worthy of this grace. God did not grant my prayer. The catechumen continued to desert my preaching, and I foresaw the day when the brethren themselves would be shaken, and thought of fleeing with my flock."

Eudemos was silent, then he resumed in a sorrowful voice:

"It was the night before the festival of the resurrection, and I resolved to pass it at the foot of the cross, in the field where the faithful gathered. Perhaps, on that supreme night, God would grant my constant prayers! The next day the pagans also were to celebrate their festival, the triennial festival of Dionysos, on Mount Cytheron. The houses of Orchomena were illuminated and hung with flowers and vine branches.

"I went to the field, which was lighted by the moon. I walked despondently, although around me the joyousness of nature proclaimed the resurrection, I did not hear the nightingales that sung upon the swaying branches of the budding rose laurel. I walked with eyes on the ground, deaf and blind as the pagan idols. I did not raise my eyes until, when I drew near the altar, I felt that a human form stood before me. I stopped, rooted to the spot. Standing upon the very step of the altar, leaning on the holy table, Diotimus was watching my approach.

"Behind him, on the altar, in the place where on the preceding night the cross stretched its arms, arose the statue of Dionysos. In the grass, at the foot of the altar the cross was overthrown!

" 'What art thou doing here?' I cried, 'instrument of the angel of darkness!'

" 'I am come,' answered Diotimus, without changing his attitude, 'to return to the god the altar which you have stolen. He has revealed to me in a dream that I shall re-establish his religion.'

" 'Oh, sacrilege!' cried I, covering my face with my hands. 'Priest of Dionysos, begone; and take away thine idol of marble.'

" 'No,' answered Diotimus, 'I have restored the altar of which thou hast dispossessed the god. Praise to Dionysos, the god of the Orchomenans!'

"My limbs trembled with indignation. I advanced toward him.

" 'Begone!' said I, 'if thou dost not desire that I break this vain simulacrum.'

"He drew himself up to his full height, with arms extended, before the statue of Dionysos.

" 'No, priest of this new religion, who blasphemest the gods of Greece, thou shalt not touch the sacred image of the son of Zeus. I will stand like the soldier at the post which his commander has entrusted to him. Go to other lands, far from the city of the ancient Dionysos; go, renegade of Athena, goddess of thy country!'

" 'The soldier of Jesus Christ has no other country than the celestial city,' I answered; 'neither will he desert at the hour of battle.'

"We were face to face; he resolved not to abandon the altar, I to drive him from it.

"I then fixed my eyes upon the prostrate cross, and I saw that one of the arms had been broken by the hammer of this priest. I lifted it, although it was heavy; but I could have wielded the club of Hercules, such strength did anger give me—and brandished it in the air.

" 'Spirit of evil!' I cried, 'begone, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!'

"Diotimus smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

" 'I know from whence comes thy rage,' he said. 'The wor-

shippers of thy crucified god each day become fewer at thy sermons. Come to-day to Mount Cytheron and thou shalt find them by the hundreds, those whom thy false words have caused to deny Dionysos, and whom I have brought back to the faith of their fathers. Return in three years to our sacred festivals and thou shalt see all those who yet follow thy teachings. All will be crowned with vine leaves and all will sing:

“‘Hallelujah! Glory to Dionysos!’

“‘Ah, Satan, malediction on thee!’ I cried. I lifted the cross above my head, and terrible I let it fall upon his brow. Diotimus fell before the altar. He made no movement to avoid the blow. He offered himself, on the contrary, as a sacrifice. His eyes closed, and he murmured, raising his head by a supreme effort to the impassive idol:

“‘The blood of the victim purifies the altar!’

“Then he fell to the earth without a sound, like a lily mown down—he was dead.”

“Oh!” cried Julius Gallus.

“I looked for an instant in stupor at Diotimus; but the weight of the cross, which my hands had not released, drew me from my contemplation. I laid upon the altar the sign of our redemption, then I took the hammer of Diotimus, I withdrew the idol, I broke its members one after another, I threw its face into the dust. In its place, I lifted the cross, thrown down by the priest of Dionysos. And I fell on my knees before the altar, my forehead to the ground, and I repeated:

“‘Lord, I have labored for the glory of Thy name; I have struck the devouring wolf that prowled around Thy sheep.’

“Then, Julius Gallus, I saw things, the memory of which alone freezes my blood.

“I lifted my head to contemplate the cross when I saw that it shone like a burning flame. I saw it grow, and grow, till it covered the sky with its rays.

“And Jesus appeared, nailed to the tree of salvation. Blood flowed from his hands and from his feet, transpierced, tears fell from His eyes, so sad, Julius Gallus, that there is no grief comparable to that of having seen them.

“The Crucified One regarded me silently, then he lowered His head to Diotimus. A great light radiated from the body of the young priest, an aureole encircled his white brow.

“‘Blessed,’ said Jesus, ‘are they who die for their faith!’

“And I saw angels descending from heaven without the

sound of wings. They flew to Diotimus and laid palms upon his body, then they raised it in their hands and bore it with them into space. And they sang:

"Blessed are they who die for their faith!"

"I followed them with my eyes as far as I could see them, and then I fell lifeless upon the ground.

"When I returned to life the day was dawning, and I rose and looked around me. I thought that I was a victim of a temptation of the evil spirit, but near the altar I saw the fragments of the statue of Dionysos, on the altar, the mutilated cross, and upon the steps of the holy table one of the sandals of Diotimus. I had not been the sport of a demon.

"I returned home and locked myself in my room to collect my wandering mind. But at the second hour one of the brethren knocked at my door.

"'Christ is risen!' he cried in an outburst of joy. 'My lord and father, rejoice! God has manifested Himself this night. The faithful who went to our altar at daybreak have seen beside the holy table the pieces of a statue of Dionysos, which strewed the ground, and upon the altar step they found a sandal. Knowest thou to whom it belonged, father? To this Diotimus, this accursed impostor. He has disappeared this night. Since dawn the other priests of Dionysos have sought for him in vain. This priest was only an imp of hell, raised by Satan to tempt the faithful. The proof is over, thanks to our Lord. This miracle will make many converts. Let us rejoice, Christ is risen!'"

"Dost thou not think like the brother," asked Julius Gallus, "that this Diotimus was an incarnation of Satan?"

"Oh, that it were true! But the angels descending with palms?"

"Other forms of demons."

"But the apparition of Jesus crucified?"

"Demons have been seen to assume even that divine form."

Eudemos shook his head.

"God does not permit that demons should deceive his servants to that point. Demons seduce, but touch not. They could not imitate the sorrowful look of our Lord, which pierced my heart like a sword of fire. I should not be pursued by this remorse if I had been the worker of Providence. Since then I have fled like Cain. Every night I see the Lord, weeping and bleeding on the cross, and angels chanting unceasingly,

bearing away the body of Diotimus, 'Blessed are they who die for their faith!'

"I left my church, which was prospering, in hands more worthy than mine, and I went forth to preach the goodness of the Lamb, whom I have wounded!"

Eudemos bowed his head and tears ran down his cheeks.

Julius Gallus said to him:

"It is perhaps the sin of anger which God is making thee expiate. Have faith in His infinite mercy, pardon will be granted thee. But what I cannot understand are the palms borne by angels to this priest of Dionysos. Has not Jesus said, 'He who is not for me is against me'? Comprehendest thou, my brother, this glorification of a pagan?"

"No; I do not comprehend it yet," answered Eudemos.

"Tell me," continued Julius Gallus, "didst thou tell the brethren thy part in the miracle of Easter eve?"

"No," answered Eudemos; "the hand of God was evidently in all these things. I thought that for the edification of the brethren it were better to be silent concerning my bloody deed."

Julius Gallus remained thoughtful for a moment, then he added:

"Thou wert right."

And he murmured after a time:

"The ways of the Lord are past understanding."

Then the two brethren were silent, and remained motionless in the darkness.



Anecdotes.

IN this department of short stories about people, compiled from various sources and contributed, an annual subscription to Short Stories will be given each month for the best original or selected anecdote sent in by any contributor. The Editor cannot undertake to return contributions or engage in correspondence over them. If the extract is valuable keep a copy of it. Communications should be marked "Anecdotes," care The Current Literature Publishing Co., Bryant Building, 55 Liberty St., New York, and should be signed with name or initials.

Foiled.

One cold, icy morning in December the nonentity of the high school at C— arrived at the schoolhouse late by ten minutes. The teacher, who delighted in reprimanding him, demanded an excuse in tones which attracted the attention of all the scholars in the room.

"George, were you out late last evening?"

"Why, I did think that I would never get here. Every step I took ahead I slipped two steps behind; the sidewalks are so slippery."

Confident that he had nicely "caught" his pupil, the teacher remarked as follows:

"By a simple method of computation we have then, that at every effort made by you to proceed forward, your feet slipped upon the pavement and you proceeded in the opposite direction from that you anticipated. How, then, in the name of Euclid are you here now, since your direction was backward instead of forward?"

Smiling cynically at his pupils, he awaited the answer. It came.

"I turned around and started for home." George was excused without further ceremony.

(In accordance with our offer, the subscription to Short Stories for one year has been awarded to Mr. Dwight Anderson, 219 Streater Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio, for the foregoing, the best anecdote contributed during the month.)

An Oriental Washington.

Patriotism is an important branch of a mission school education. Foon Ying, aged seven, has already ab-

sorbed the great truth underlying the old-time "hatchet" story. After listening intently to it, for the first time last Washington's Birthday, she said: "I same as George Washington. Yesterday Kum Leen, Chee and I take our chopsticks and chase Yoke's chickens round the yard. Yoke open window, say, 'You chase chickens?' Kum Leen and Chee say, 'No, I not chase.' I say, 'Yes, I chase.' Yoke say, 'Kum Leen and Chee, you come in kitchen and stand long time in corner. Foon Ying, you good girl, you not stand in corner. You not tell lie.' I same as George Washington."

Gertrude M. Merser.

An Irish Resolution.

The following is a resolution of an Irish corporation: "That a new jail should be built, that this be done out of the materials of the old one, and the old jail to be used until the new one be completed."

A. G. B.

Double Meanings.

One day when a celebrated barrister was on his way to Westminster Hall with his large bag full of briefs, he was impudently accosted by a boy, who asked him if he was a dealer in old clothes.

"No," replied the barrister, "these are all new suits."

"My friends," said a builder, whose health had been drunk at a dinner in celebration of the completion of a public hall which he had constructed, "My friends, I would gladly express my feel-

ANECDOTES—Continued.

ings did I not feel that I am better fitted for the scaffold than for public speaking."

He was a great bore and was talking to a crowd about the local coming election. He said, "Jones is a good man; he is capable, honest, fearless and conscientious. He will make the very kind of official we need. He once saved my life from drowning."

"Do you really want to see Jones elected?" said a solemn-faced old man.

"I do, indeed. I'd do anything to see him elected," said the bore.

"Then never let anybody know he saved your life," counselled the solemn-faced man."

Arthur H. Williams.

An Important Question.

Sydney Smith was advised, when ill, to take a morning walk on an empty stomach. "Upon whose?" was his inquiry.

M. H. M.

Lord Plunket's Wit.

Lord Plunket is said to have acutely felt his forced resignation of the Irish Chancellorship and his supersedure by Lord Campbell. A violent tempest arose on the day of the latter's expected arrival, and a friend remarked to Plunket how sick of his promotion the passage must have made the newcomer. "Yes," replied the ex-Chancellor, ruefully, "but it won't make him 'throw up' the seals."

Frances McClellan.

Sympathy for Orphans.

Many anecdotes of pithy and facetious replies are recorded of a minister of the South, usually distinguished as "Our Wattie Dunlop." On one occasion two irreverent young fellows determined, as they said, to "taigle" (confound) the minister. Coming up to him in the High street of Dumfries, they accosted him with much solemnity, "Maister Dunlop, hae ye heard the

news?" "What news?" "Oh, the deil's dead." "Is he?" said Mr. Dunlop, "then I maun pray for two faithless bairns."

M. E. Steele.

"Plucked."

Scotch parish schoolmasters are, on their appointment, examined as to their literary qualifications. One of the fraternity being called by his examiner to translate Horace's ode beginning, "Exegi monumentum cere perennius," commenced as follows: "Exegi monumentum—I have eaten a mountain."

"Ah," said one of the examiners, "ye needna proceed any further; for after eatin' sic a dinner, this parish wad be a puir mouthfu' t' ye. Ye maun try some wider sphere."

Dabney H. Greene.

An Unwelcome Godspeed.

A Scotch newspaper relates that a beggar wife, on receiving a gratuity from the Rev. John Skinner, of Langside, author of "Tullochgorum," said to him by way of thanks, "Oh, sir, I houp that ye and a' your family will be in heaven the nicht."

"Well," said Skinner, "I am very much obliged to you; only you need not have just been so particular as to the time."

A. B. K.

He Poked His Nose In.

Dr. Von Stephen, the German postmaster-general, recently took a train from Konigsburg to enjoy a few days' deer stalking, says London Tid-Bits.

Arrived at Dirschau, a town near his destination, he stepped into the station telegraph office to send news of his safety to his wife in Berlin. The official recognized his chief at once, and with all obsequiousness began to write down his message. Suddenly the Morse instrument, used for service telegrams only, began to work, and very shortly His Excellency pricked up his ears, for he distinguished the particular

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ANECDOTES—Continued.

clicks that represent his own name. A glance at the clerk's face, now deathly pale, induced him to inquire further into the purport of this state telegram, and when the ticking had ceased he took up the paper ribbon and read as follows:

"Look out for squalls. Stephen is somewhere on the line. He will be poking his nose everywhere."

The postmaster-general smiled sardonically and then went to the transmitter and flashed back this reply:

"Too late. He has already poked his nose in here. Stephen." A. H. W.

A Home Thrust.

The former Lord Elphinstone's parish minister was a very scatter-brained theologian, and in his sermons often knew not the end from the beginning.

One Sunday His Lordship, in his customary sleeping, gave vent to an unmistakable snore. This was too much for the minister, who stopped and cried: "Waken, my Lord Elphinstone!"

A grunt followed and then His Lordship answered: "I'm no sleepin', minister."

"But ye are sleepin'. I wager ye dinna ken what I said last," exclaimed the pastor.

"Ou ay," returned the peer. "Ye said: 'Waken, my Lord Elphinstone.'"

"Ay, ay," said the minister. "But I wager ye dinna ken what I said last before that."

"Tuts!" rejoined the nobleman, promptly. "I'll wager ye dinna ken yerself." George K. Hackett.

An Exchange of Courtesies.

Lord Morris did not make a favorable impression on his first appearance in the House of Lords. One conspicuous member of the chamber, it is reported, interrupted him in his maiden speech by requesting to be informed "what language the noble and learned lord was speaking." Lord Morris himself, after his début, was asked how he

had "got along." "Well," he replied, "I made wan mistake. I should have practiced spakin' to a lot of grave-stones before I addressed their lordships."

M. S. H.

Lord Elgin.

Lord Elgin, the retiring viceroy of India, is a remarkably poor horseman, says the Chicago Journal. At Simla, one day, he was taking horseback exercises along the local Rotten Row. One of the pillars of Indian state wanted to discuss a matter of imperial importance with him, and sent an aid-de-camp to ask him if he might join his excellency in his ride. The aid-de-camp cantered up and said: "Your excellency!" No answer was vouchsafed. A little nonplussed, the envoy tried again, with no better result. In desperation he returned to the attack with: "Your excellency! Mr. So-and-So requests—" "Good God, sir," cried Lord Elgin, turning upon him furiously, "can't you see I'm riding?"

Abner G. Kelly.

A Catchy Story.

For a story with a catch in it the following from a London publication isn't bad:

Once, when in Paris, Napoleon paid a visit to a hospital for old soldiers. Among the inmates was an old man who had lost an arm. The emperor asked him:

"Where did you lose your arm?"

"At Austerlitz, sire."

"Then, no doubt, you curse the emperor and your country for your fate?"

"On the contrary," said the veteran, "for the emperor and my country I would sacrifice my other arm."

"I can hardly believe it," said the emperor.

The soldier immediately drew a saber from its sheath and lopped off the other arm.

"A most sublime act of self-sacrifice," said the old lady who had been listen-

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ANECDOTES—Continued.

ing to the yarn, totally forgetting the impossibility of a one-armed man cutting off his remaining arm.

R. W. Wilkes.

Only Half a Job.

A Scotch farmer, celebrated in his neighborhood for his immense strength and skill in athletic exercises, very frequently had the pleasure of contending with people who came to try their strength against his. Lord D., a great pugilistic amateur, went from London on purpose to fight the athletic Scot. The latter was working in an enclosure at a little distance from his house when the noble lord arrived. His lordship tied his horse to a tree and addressed the farmer.

"Friend, I have heard marvellous reports of your skill, and have come a long way to see which of us two is the better wrestler."

The Scotchman, without answering, seized the nobleman, pitched him over the hedge and then set about working again. When Lord D. got up—

"Well," said the farmer, "have you anything to say to me?"

"No," replied his lordship, "but perhaps you'd be good enough to throw me my horse."

E. D. B.

A Filial Son.

The following anecdote is printed in Labouchère's Truth, as illustrative of the customs of the wily Pathan: "A certain general and his staff, while wending their way through one of the narrow valleys of Tirah, were annoyed by the attentions of a solitary marksman, who from time to time sent a bullet unpleasantly close. At last the general turned to his orderly—a Pathan sowar—and told him to dismount, take his carbine and try and stalk the mountaineer. The sowar started off, and presently there was a crack, and a gray-bearded old Afridi tumbled headlong down the mountain side. The

sowar rejoined and fell into his place. 'Well done!' said the general; 'but how on earth did you manage it so easily?' 'Oh,' replied the sowar; 'I knew his habits. He was my father.'

Harriet M. Hall.

To Memory Dear.

A novel reason for remembering an old schoolmate was once given by a Scotchman, according to an English journal.

A Scotchman who had been a long time in the colonies paid a visit to his "native glen," and meeting an old schoolfellow, the two sat down to chat about old times and acquaintances. In the course of the conversation the stranger happened to ask about a certain Geordie McKay.

"He's dead long ago," said his friend, "and I'll never cease regrettin' him as long as I live."

"Dear me! Had you such a respect for him as that?"

"Na, na! It wasna ony respect I had for himself; but I married his widow."

George W. Harkness.

Reforming a Parrot.

A Pittsburger, who spent a part of last summer in England, tells an incident which sadly disturbed the religious peace of a parish in Penzance.

A maiden lady of that town owned a parrot, which, somehow, acquired the disagreeable habit of observing at frequent intervals:

"I wish the old lady would die."

This annoyed the bird's owner, who spoke to her curate about it.

"I think we can rectify the matter," replied the good man. "I also have a parrot, and he is a righteous bird, having been brought up in the way he should go. I will lend you my parrot, and I trust his influence will reform that depraved bird of yours."

The curate's parrot was placed in the same room with the wicked one, and as soon as the two had become accus-



BY RICHARD LAWRENCE MAKIN

“MY dear Hastings, it does me good to see you!” the colonel said as he grasped my hand. “It almost makes me feel as if I were on the blue grass again to get a look at that face of yours. Off with your wraps and find a seat somewhere, and I’ll ring for some of the best corn whisky you’ve tasted since you left the dear old State.”

The speaker was no less a person than Colonel Junius Brutus Cox, Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of America at St. Petersburg, and this cordial reception took place in one of the larger rooms of that legation, where I found the colonel, on my arrival from the station, very much at his ease in a comfortable smoking jacket, as he stood warming his back before a bright coal fire—the embodiment of democratic simplicity.

“I got that stuff,” the colonel went on, with a comprehensive wave of his hand toward a well-filled tray just set before him, in answer to his summons, “I got that stuff in without paying duty, because I’m a minister, and between you and me that’s about the only advantage I’ve seen in the position since I left home. Speaking of home—you were out in Kentucky last spring, they write me, and went over the old plantation.

*Written for Short Stories. Illustrations by William A. Mackay.

Gad, sir! I'd give up all this foolishness of gold lace and red tape ten times over to get one whiff of that prairie air. But I'm in for it now. Got to stick by the administration, especially as we're in a mess over this Velesky extradition matter. Well, the Department of State has done one thing of sense—they've sent me the man I asked for. I haven't known you in Kentucky since ten years before the war for nothing. They advise me that you come fully posted as to this suspect, Malikoff, at New York."

"I have taken a mental protograph of him more accurate than the average product of the camera," I said laughing, "and the chief of the New York police has such a very careful eye on the original that we may regard our suspect as on call when wanted. Yet, under the orders of the Department of State, no arrests have as yet been made. Our Government is determined that the demand of Russia for this man's extradition, on the ground of his identity with a would-be assassin, shall not be made a cloak to cover political offenses. I must say it strikes me as extraordinary that so marked a man could have left Russia without the knowledge of the police, especially so soon after the late attempt on the life of the Czar."

"My dear boy," the colonel put in, with a touch of impatience, "there's nothing in the whole category of the extraordinary which Velesky has not only accomplished once, but many times. As for disappearing, he has always been in the habit of disappearing whenever, after each of his little misunderstandings with the imperial authorities here, the keenest police force in Europe were ready to lay a restraining hand upon his slippery shoulder. I've got no special sympathy with the ways that are dark in the annals of Russian diplomacy, as you know, but this time I really believe they've found their man. All you've got to do, my dear boy, is to compare the police records of Velesky here with your knowledge of the New York suspect, and then the job's done, don't you see? Take another glass of that mixture (the same Judge Carter used to mix for us at Lexington ten years ago), and when you begin to feel its benign influence you can't fail to look at this thing as I do. But to begin at the beginning—what do you think of that?"

While speaking the colonel had opened a drawer of an old-fashioned secretary, and drawing therefrom a small, oblong card, handed it to me with a touch of satisfaction visible in his easy manner.

"What, not a photograph of Velesky!" I exclaimed, fastening my eyes with eager attention on the wretched print, the portrait of a man of middle age in rough peasant costume.

"You're surprised, of course," the colonel said with a chuckle. "Velesky, as you know, though often hard pressed, has never been in the hands of the police. They got this in one of their raids upon the Nihilist committees. It was found on one of the women and identified as a portrait of the great agitator by several of the police spies. The only difficulty, my



dear boy, is to find the original. Curiously enough, several people who have seen this thing are convinced they have also seen the original somewhere, but utterly fail to place him. Now it's your turn to see what you can do."

As a rule, my nerves are iron, but despite my best efforts the hand which held this innocent-looking piece of evidence for the prosecution shook slightly. Similarity enough in the general construction of the two faces there certainly was to ac-

count for the superficial inferences of the smart Government detective who had represented Russia in the movement for the arrest of Malikoff in New York, but here, to my mind, any resemblance ceased. Had there been nothing beyond this in either face to attract special attention, I, too, might have deemed it sufficient, but there was something in the photograph before me so unique that I felt any one who had ever seen the original could have found no room for the doubts which still beset me.

"I am not going to pass judgment on this thing now," I began, determined to gain time. "There is a curious quality of expression in this head of Velesky, which I not only find lacking in that of our New York Socialist, but which in all my careful study of faces I never remember to have seen before. Yet, though novel, it is not beyond analysis. Such an expression might be possible in the face of any man who had for years carried his life in his hand, in what he believed a sacred cause. It lies almost entirely in the eyes, though the lines of the mouth are in sympathy with it. How to put it in words I hardly know. The capacity for suffering you would look for in the face of a martyr, coupled with the bloodthirstiness of a wolf. A certain nobility in strange fellowship with fierce brutality, an avenging angel, a pitiless executioner, blended in one. If I were asked to decide now I should say there could be no connection between this face and that of Malikoff, the suspect, and yet there are strong similarities of feature; in a word, I must have time."

"I shall begin to believe my julep is working the wrong way if you are going to make this thing turn upon a mere matter of expression," the colonel said, with a touch of that hauteur for which, when annoyed, he was so noted at the Kentucky bar. "No; you're right not to rush into any such foolishness as that. You'd better take time and pass no judgments, at least until you've met Galitzine. Stop! I'd nearly forgotten, I dine there to-night, and there's a card for you as well as for one or two of the other gentlemen of the legation. You see, I've told him all about your connection with this Velesky matter, in which he takes an absorbing interest, and he made a point of your being there, doubtless with a view of drawing you out. Galitzine's Grand Chamberlain to the Empress, the cleverest statesman in Russia, besides which he finds time to be a very charming fellow. The very man to wipe out all these

fine vagaries and put you down on a solid basis of fact. There's nothing to prevent your coming, I suppose?"

"Hardly," I said. "I'll come with pleasure."

"Here's his address, then. He dines at eight o'clock, and be sure to be on time," the colonel went on, repeating the latter injunction half an hour later when I left him, by which time he had largely recovered his usual spirits, and was much more sanguine as to the ultimate outcome of the work we had undertaken.

If I lighted from my hired "droschke" at the palatial residence of the prince a few minutes late, it was through no lack of interest in meeting this man whose reputation even then extended far outside the limits of the Russian Empire, but because I had been detained at the Prefecture of Police.

"The prince seems to be economizing on servants to-night," White, a young attaché of our legation, remarked in some disgust as we took off our furs in the small entresol set apart for that purpose. "It isn't like him to neglect the proprieties. Pierre and Alphonse have charge of this room. Where in thunder are they?"

"I am quite ready to dispense with their services," I laughed good naturedly. "Tell me about Galitzine himself—the man interests me."

"Oh, Galitzine's the colonel's right-hand man," White answered, recovering his temper. "Many's the negotiation which goes smoothly enough through the soft hands of the Chamberlain that might be pigeon-holed for months if we started it through more regular channels. Oh, you're bound to like Galitzine."

White chatted on for a few moments, and then left me struggling with a large pair of fur boots, which the inclemency of a February night in Russia made a necessary protection for evening dress.

The room I was in (heated to suffocation by a huge coal stove in one corner) opened directly from the crowded and brilliantly lighted entrance hall of the palace, and was in curious contrast to it, being by this time deserted by every one save myself, and but dimly lighted by a single, smoky lamp suspended from the ceiling, its furniture consisting of several settees arranged against the walls, all of them piled with fur wraps belonging presumably to the guests upstairs.

I had hardly struggled out of my furs when my head was

fairly reeling with the heat and bad air, and with a hazy notion that it might communicate with some better ventilated apartment I seized the handle of the door nearest me and swung it open. I was not disappointed. Despite a heavy curtain which hung directly outside the door, a current of cool air made itself felt at once, and filled my lungs with new life.

I had already placed my hand on the curtain itself, with the intention of drawing that also, when my ear caught the sound of a closing door at no great distance beyond, followed by an indistinct murmur of voices which made me pause, though exactly why I hardly knew. In another instant I should doubtless have resumed my original purpose, conscious that my action was a perfectly natural one, when I inadvertently overheard a name pronounced with unmistakable distinctness, which fairly rooted me to the spot—the name of Velesky!

“We are safe enough here. The Americans went upstairs half an hour ago, and I have excused Pierre and Alphonse for an hour,” the same voice went on in answer to a cautioning “Hist!” from the party addressed. “By the by, these Americans are inclined to be stupidly useful to the cause, while entertaining the greatest desire in the world to oblige our beloved sovereign. That ass of a Minister is, they say, entirely one with the Government spies in the belief that they have unearthed our sly old fox Velesky in America. If that be so they’ve made our present task all too easy. I only want to make sure of that one point to-night, and then——”

“Why, then, if the eggs hatch we shall have chickens,” his companion put in with a laugh. “Thou wert always oversanguine, Rudolph. Well, I wish from my heart all thy rosy dreams may come true, and that this may be the last night of Alexander Romanoff. But, tell me, where am I to meet thee?”

“At the eastern end of the bridge of St. Peter at twelve, or as soon after as I can get there. From there we repair at once to the Committee, who will be in session, to receive their final instructions. They have the list of those pledged to this work. It begins with the name of Velesky himself, and ends with my own. This is our greatest effort. You have cast your lot with the best blood in Russia. But we have said enough. Thou understandest thy work, and I may be missed above stairs at any moment. Go, therefore, make thy exit by the side door, while I pass through the ante-room here. Until we meet again then, au revoir.”

If my heart had until now been thumping violently against my ribs, at these last words it threatened to stop beating altogether. No one could know better than I did that my life hung on my absolute coolness and prompt action. A glance about the sparsely furnished ante-room showed me no harbor



of refuge except behind the ponderous stove, the door of which stood open, glaring at me like the fiery eye of some infernal demon.

By God's grace, both the men in the next room had evidently crossed it leisurely to the door by which they had entered, and this respite gave me the instant of time needed.

Rapidly and noiselessly I crossed the heavy fur rugs which covered the floor, and at imminent risk of being badly burned, squeezed myself in between the stove and the wall, until I found myself in the small triangular space at its back. And I got there none too soon. Hardly had I crouched down in the suffocating atmosphere of my corner than I heard the rattle of the curtain rings, as the portiere was drawn aside. He paused an instant in evident surprise at finding the door wide open, but for an instant only, evidently reassured by the emptiness of the room.

I made no attempt to get sight of him until he had entirely crossed it and had his hand on the knob of the second door. Then I held my breath and instinctively put my hand on my hip pocket (where, with the instinct of an American traveling in barbarous Russia, I had secreted a Smith & Wesson revolver). I took one good, comprehensive look at him, peering over the top of my screen for the space of half a second. The face I could not see, as it was, of necessity, turned from me, but I made a mental note of the tall, lank figure, as good as the man's death warrant, though in another instant he was gone.

To remain where I was for the next five minutes, as a precaution against his return, was the hardest piece of discipline I ever voluntarily went through. I knew I had been due upstairs this last fifteen minutes, and that any further delay would be very difficult to explain, especially if the eyes of this new-made acquaintance of mine should be fastened on me across the prince's table. My disquiet of mind was only equaled by my abject physical misery, for I could almost feel myself simmer under the heat of that infernal stove.

When I again stood in the middle of the room, brushing the dust off my evening clothes, I felt by contrast, almost cool, and began to gather my wits about me for the coming struggle I knew I had to face. Complicated as I knew my problem to be, I was convinced I could work out some solution. It was not difficult to estimate the portentous significance of the secret of which I had just become possessed. If the very guests at the Chamberlain's table were thus steeped in Nihilistic treason the life of Alexander might that night hang on the discretion of a certain young American whose name he had never heard. Yet, as I crossed the brilliantly lighted hall and followed an obsequious attendant in the Galitzine livery up the grand stair-

case, I had pretty well made up my mind as to my course of action.

To put the prince upon his guard while in the very presence of the chief conspirator was, of course, out of the question. I must bide my time for that, and seek a word in private later. If White did not betray the hour of my arrival, I had it in my power to put Monsieur Rudolph entirely off his guard. I would even go so far as to convince the prince and his guests that I leaned toward the theory of Velesky's capture in America, and thus start the rascal Rudolph on his career of crime at midnight, perfectly secure in the belief that we were following a wrong scent. If I played my cards well I believed I should be able to take him red-handed, and the fact that the game was a close and dangerous one only added zest to the excitement of the thing.

The subdued hum of voices in the room I entered ceased for an instant at the arrival of the last guest, and I was conscious that the eyes of the small party collected there were turned on me in some curiosity. Returning the compliment, a comprehensive glance showed me the party from the legation—the colonel, White and one other attaché—supported by perhaps half a dozen Russians, two or three in the splendid uniform of the staff, the rest, like myself, in citizen's evening dress, the effect heightened by a ribbon or two, or a jeweled order here or there. The absence of ladies, and a certain ease and freedom in the attitude of all present, indicated the unofficial character of the entertainment, and showed me that I owed my being there at all to my personal relations with my country's representative, who, I must say, eyed me just at this moment with a frown of deep displeasure as he came forward to present me to my host.

That the face of the prince was strikingly handsome had very little to do with the intense interest which it excited in me on the instant, for in spite of the fascination which those regular features undoubtedly possessed, their hold over me rested more in the sense of tremendous intellectual power, conveyed by the high forehead and by the soft, though sharply penetrating eyes. The mouth I was not so sure about. Firm set, and marked with resolute purpose though it was, there were lines about it which might, under certain circumstances, prove less attractive. Yet it was just here that the face haunted me from the first instant my eyes rested upon it. New as it was

to me, the impress it left upon my mind was curiously familiar, starting a train of vague, drifting thoughts, the import of which I could not grasp.

"I trust I haven't kept you waiting," I began, taking refuge in the usual disgusting commonplace, which a glance at the already open door of the dining room would have rendered untenable, and then, seeing my weakness, added with unblushing effrontery, "I was obliged to return to my carriage for something connected with this Velesky matter, which I thought you might find of interest, and in doing so have missed your dinner hour by ten minutes at least."

"My dinners are never ready until the arrival of all my guests," he answered in excellent English, the smile with which he had greeted me breaking into a short, carefully subdued laugh intended evidently to put me at my ease. "My only impatience has been to meet you," he went on. "My friend, the colonel here, has been giving me some idea of the work you have undertaken. Welcome then, to the Empire, in the name of my sovereign, and to the house of Galitzine in my own."

A low murmur of approval passed through the little group of gentlemen we now joined, at the first sentiment, and those seated rose at the reference to the emperor. I might have been more impressed by this show of loyalty had not an individual whom I believed to be my late acquaintance, Rudolph, been included in it. He was presented to me as Count Kazan, but I searched his stolid face in vain for any signs of the genius of revolution.

"He acts under a stronger will than his own," I said to myself, as I listened to a general buzz of conversation during the few moments before the announcement of dinner and our seating ourselves in the next room at a beautifully furnished table set for ten.

"Kazan is just from the Emperor," I heard Galitzine remark, turning from the colonel to the count. "Tell us, Kazan, how they take this news from America. His Majesty still clings to his belief that we have caught our fish at last?"

"Nothing will ever shake His Majesty's belief on that point," came in that confident tone which half an hour before had roused the ridicule of an obscure individual now doubtless patiently waiting at the eastern end of the bridge of St. Peter, for the hour of midnight and his co-conspirator. Ah, that

voice! Thanks to it I, too, was sure of one thing—the identity of Count Rudolph Kazan—apparently the close confidant of the Prince Galitzine.

"I am sorry to hear from his excellency, the colonel, that this gentleman has thus far been unable, through excessive caution, to confirm our belief in this Velesky matter," the prince went on, now turning directly to me, and fixing on me those wonderfully penetrating eyes. "We were in hopes that the task of the Government, as far as that rascal is concerned, would from now on prove an easy one, but if I understand rightly you have been unable to make any positive identification?"

"Your excellency must not put down the caution of a professional man as a sign of discouragement, or even of serious doubt," I answered. "It is true that I was unwilling to commit myself this morning without further investigation, but a half day spent since with your admirable Prefect of Police has brought me a good deal nearer the generally received conclusion that Malikoff and Velesky are one and the same man. I ask only another half day before laying my report before my chief."

To all outward seeming I flatter myself I was cool enough, as I took this first step in carrying out my original purpose, yet inwardly I was laboring under a curious indecision quite new to me. What it sprang from I could not have told at the moment. I knew only that while listening mechanically to the rapid tide of talk which ebbed and flowed across that sumptuous table I had become conscious of something within myself—too unformed as yet to be called a suspicion—lying dormant under the more active part of my mental processes, and which seemed just then to put me at a disadvantage.

As I spoke, I drew from my pocket the grimy little photograph upon the use of which hung so much matter of grave international import. As I did so there was a marked lull in the conversation, and every eye about that table was, I know, rivetted upon my face, including one pair whose close scrutiny it was all important I should meet inflexibly. But as yet my own were still fastened almost appealingly upon the photograph itself.

Once again, with its impalpable, almost occult influence, it seemed to draw me to it, renewing that curious, psychical impress which twelve hours before it had stamped upon my brain with my first view of it, and which now returned with

redoubled force. And then, in that instant of time, the inspiration of my life came to me as a free gift from heaven, and with a clearness and rapidity which almost startled me. For as I raised my eyes to those of the prince, I found myself under the same curious influence intensified a hundred-fold by the living, breathing face before me. The very perception of it made my head reel, coming on me so unawares, although it tallied with that previous intangible condition of semi-consciousness for which I had no name.

Utterly absurd—at variance with all common-sense as were the conclusions to which it forced me—absolutely outside the domain of sane belief as it was, from the moment when this thing took possession of me, it hardened into absolute certainty. I knew then that I was playing this game against two men instead of one—the life of the first sovereign in Europe for a stake—where a single blunder meant not only death to him but eternal disgrace to me.

“And what, may I ask, has at last brought conviction to your professional mind?” the prince was saying, with his usual urbanity. “This morning you were not certain, to-night you are. The arguments of the prefect must have been strong ones.”

“It is very simple,” I answered, smiling. “The man is an excellent mimic and gave me one or two peculiarities of voice and gesture as belonging to Velesky, which I recognized at once as belonging to the suspect, Malikoff. In two words, I am much more hopeful. By to-morrow I hope to place the matter in the colonel’s hands, when a telegram to New York will secure the arrest of the man we want.”

I really felt wicked as I saw the brightening face of the colonel. That my explanation satisfied him there could be no question. Whether it had raised doubts in other minds, I had no means of knowing.

As the talk became more general again I threw myself into it, conscious that any signs of anxiety as to the flight of time meant defeat for all my carefully laid plans. It was already well on to eleven when we all, at a sign from the prince, rose from the table, and made our way once more into the reception room. No, not all, for my eyes had not kept greedy watch of Kazan for nothing.

As the rest of us filed by twos and threes through the main entrance of the dining room, I saw the latter exchange a rapid

glance with Galitzine and disappear through a side door. Then, at last, I knew that the seed I had sown had taken root. But I had still sharper work ahead of me.

I saw White in the distance in easy chat with the prince and evidently making his adieus, and knew that in him lay my safest means of communicating with the outside world. Being for the moment unobserved in the general movement of the guests, I drew out my note book and with fingers that shook a trifle in spite of myself, wrote down the following:

"TO MARDORFF, CHIEF OF POLICE:

"Have two of your best men at the eastern end of the bridge of St. Peter at twelve sharp, to-night. That may be only just in time, or they may have to wait. Two men will meet there. Shadow both from that moment; one, perhaps both, will repair at once to the rendezvous of the Nihilist Central Committee, which they will find in session. Have force sufficient to raid the entire place. You will be able to seize documents implicating those in high places. Lose no time and communicate this to no one not on your own force, not even officials deep in the confidence of the Emperor.

"HASTINGS."

I saw clearly enough that there was no getting away for me. My only salvation lay in White. His hand was already on the rich portière which hung before the entrance to the room, and the prince had turned back after his last hand-shake, evidently much amused over some remark of the young attaché, for his usual smile had broadened into a laugh, and he was shaking a warning forefinger at the delinquent.

"What, you going, too?" he said, accosting me with playful reproachfulness, through which I caught, or thought I caught, a lightning flash of suspicion. "If you are I hope you've got a weightier reason for it than your colleague here. He says he promised to look in at the Countess Ruska's card party—the countess being a veritable dragon with a cast in one eye."

"Oh, you're not going to get rid of me so easily," I said, following his tone. "I only want to send word back to the legation not to expect me to-night. I have work to do which should settle the fate of our friend Malikoff by to-morrow morning."

White was already at the foot of the stairs when I got out into the hall, and I joined him as he entered that infernal cloak-

room where three hours before the little drama had begun which was now in full swing. I waived aside an attendant who proffered his services, and he had no sooner closed the door behind him than I thrust the note I had just written into the hand of the astonished White.

"For God's sake, lose no time in getting that to the Chief of Police," I said in answer to the question I saw in his face. "The honor of the legation, perhaps the life of the Emperor, depends upon your dispatch and secrecy. Ask no explanations, events will explain themselves to-morrow. There is only one man in St. Petersburg who must lay eyes on it. Give your driver directions to drive first to the Countess Ruska's,



otherwise you would arouse suspicion and be followed. When half a dozen blocks from here change your direction to the Prefecture of Police and drive like mad. You've got three-quarters of an hour yet."

White, like the trained man he was, took his cue and only nodded in acceptance of his trust. Three minutes later I was at the head of the stairs again and under the soft radiance of the candelabra of the reception room.

How completely I succeeded in calming any latent suspicion, which may have lurked in the mind of the prince, for the next two hours, I never knew; but if suspicion were there he thought it unnecessary to put it into action, which was all I cared for. As for the colonel, he was by this time in the best of

spirits, and his being so was of more help to me than, perhaps, I have given him credit for. He was deep in some hunter's yarns of Western Kentucky, a country which had been visited by the prince some years previously, and thus I again had my thoughts to myself.

The Prefect of Police I knew would lose no time. By an hour after the appointment by the bridge of St. Peter he should have in his hands the incriminating documents of the Central Committee. If he were not here by one o'clock I should know that my studies in psychology had played me false. I counted the colonel's conversational powers good for at least an hour. It was already close on twelve.

Deep in their talk the flying moments passed unheeded by the other men. To me they seemed to drag as if weighted with lead.

Twelve o'clock struck, then the half hour. By some connivance of the powers of evil the colonel noticed it and rose to go. For a moment I thought my game was up. Wine and fresh cigars had just been brought in, and in defiance of all etiquette I raised my freshly filled glass to my lips, and gently but firmly drew the colonel back into his seat beside me.

"Your Kentucky bear stories are nothing compared to some of my men-stalking experiences," I said in boisterous good humor, and without being asked, I launched into a long yarn of work in our Secret Service during the war. I could see the colonel thought I was drunk, and was beginning to be ashamed of me, but the rest of them proved a most appreciative audience. I was just drawing to a close when Galitzine said:

"And some of those fellows even had positions under your Government then?"

"Those were the most dangerous, your excellency," I said laughing. "If we had had no enemies in our rear, even in our own employ, our civil war would have been a much simpler matter, but, as I was saying, I got them safely lodged in Fort Warren, in Boston Harbor."

His eyes were on me again, but just then a loud ring at the "porte-cochère" below turned all eyes toward the door.

A moment of curious silence, and a servant entered with a card upon a silver tray, which he presented to his master.

The interruption had broken up the entertainment, and most of the gentlemen rose to depart.

"It must be a matter of some importance," the prince began in a tone of apology. "A call from the Chief of Police at this hour is unusual," and again his eyes were reading my very soul.

"I think he is in the hall just outside, your excellency," I remarked, as I drew aside the curtain.

"I should have liked to ask you for the sequel of this story of yours," he said politely.

"All stories should have a fitting climax," I said, a little



grimly, "and that of mine ends here. But we are keeping you from the Prefect. Good night."

I knew the colonel set down my apparent incoherence to the wine, but I gave the prince credit for no such indulgent construction.

I went out first, still in defiance of etiquette, meeting, as I expected, the chief in the hall.

"You have found the evidence I promised you?" I asked.

"Much more," he answered, equally laconic. "We have found Velesky!"

"You have absolute proof?" I went on hurriedly, conscious that the other gentlemen were following me into the hall.

"Absolute. Kazan is caught, and has confessed. If Prince Galitzine be still within there I had better lose no time in seeing him," he added grimly.

"I hear my name. Your business with me seems to be pressing," came just then in a perfectly collected voice from behind me, and turning I found the prince at my side.

"By St. Peter, Mardorff, when we imported this young attaché of the American Legation for you we did a good stroke of business. He thinks he's on the track of Velesky."

"I believe he is, your excellency," the rigid official answered respectfully, though there was a sinister gleam in the face he turned upon the prince. "In fact, I'm so sure of it that I want your help at the Prefecture to-night. But come prepared for a long stay—we may be detained."

To my dying day I shall never forget the look in those eyes as they turned upon me then. Even though I knew I had saved a life—and the life of an emperor—by my work that night, I almost found it in my heart to pity him.

That work was over; but I still had no easy task in getting the colonel back to the legation without suspecting anything, after taking an almost affectionate leave of the prince.

When the next day arrived, with its startling revelations of the identity of that confidential servant of the Czar with Velesky, we had equal difficulty in making the colonel believe it.

With that strange man's subsequent imprisonment and romantic escape I had also some connection, but no longer in the capacity of attaché to the American Legation on Special Service of the Department of State.





BY ANNIE E. P. SEARING.

It was hot, and the man was fat. As he drew up before the gate of the little brown house and twisted the reins around the whip, he paused a moment to wipe his dripping forehead, and then got himself slowly on to the step and so to the ground with a thud, from which the light buggy sprung up and rocked madly back and forth.

"Hello!" said the man genially, looking about him, "seems to a-rained children around here!" There were nine in sight, but from a certain restless and noisy ubiquitousness, they appeared to fill the little dooryard and to brim over the gate. Perched on the post sat a weird little figure, peaked and pale-faced, with a shock of red gold hair over her shoulders. She sat still and watched the man tie his horse and pull a big book out from under the seat. The others all started to run like sheep, shouting, "Aunt Li-ib! Gran'ma! Aunt Lib!" toward the house, where they disappeared within. The small figure, with her sharp chin in her hands and elbows resting on hunched-up knees, coughed. The man looked up and stopped with the quick sympathy of one who loved children.

"Where on earth did you manage to ketch a cold like that this hot weather?"

"T'aint a cold, it's consumption!"

"Good Lord!" He mopped his face and stared at the small person on the post, who seemed all hair and hollow eyes and cough.

"We all die off with it in our family, an' it's my turn," she added proudly. The man felt a pitying impulse to stay near her.

"Come on down," he said, "and help find 'Aunt Lib,' if she's the lady of this house."

"She ain't Aunt Lib to me. She's my grandma, and there ain't no lady of the house. Her and me is only stayin' here, and don't I just hate it!"

At this point the nine reappeared, bursting out of the various openings of the house, and she who was variously "Aunt Lib" and "Grandma" stood in the doorway. She was a thin, drab-colored woman who looked as if she had been tired out years ago, and had long forgotten the habit of resting. There was a lingering prettiness in her blue eyes, and a certain delicacy and dependence in her whole expression that somehow betrayed at once her inadequacy to the present situation. The children boiled and foamed about her with as utter a disregard of her presence as if she had been a log floating in turbulent water.

"I hope you'll excuse the intrusion," the Fat Man began, with an elaborate politeness of manner that caused her to color with pleasure, "but I have here a work that I am sure a lady of your evident refinement and intelligence will desire to peruse. I'll step in for a few, a very few moments, with your permission." Here there were cat-calls and jeers ill-concealed, and one of the boys went turning cartwheels down the veranda. Aunt-Lib-and-Grandma looked pained and mortified, but helpless. Once in the cool front parlor, the enemy temporarily halted in the passage, the recital went on unhindered, while she sat on the edge of a chair and listened enthralled. It was so long since any man had treated her with deference, so long since one had taken pains to show her anything or address the conversation to her alone, that she felt thrilled with a sense of elation and flattery, a state of mind or nerves that any consideration of interested motives on the agent's part would have failed to destroy.

"Now this is the Great Repository of Universal Knowledge—everything in it you want to know. You only need to have the letter the word begins with and you can find it. The pictures alone are worth the whole price. We turn to the letter P—pneumonia—person would hardly expect to find that disease under that letter, but here she is. Tells all about the complaint, how to recognize it and how to cure it, wonderfully useful. Now we turn to—let's see, pyramids, with the picture

of one and the great Sphinx thrown in. Now ain't that life-like?"

Here the nine came pelting and pouring in. Nothing could restrain them if there were to be pictures.

"Here's pygmies, the dwarfs of Africa, very interesting account of these remarkable little people—supposed to be our ancestors, you know." At this there was a half-suppressed chorus of "Ah, give us a rest!" "Oh, I don't know!" "Wot's eatin' yer?" and one small boy swallowed his gum and set up a wail to that effect.

Poor Aunt-Lib-and-Grandma looked helplessly ashamed, but the harangue went on. It was beautiful to her, like a series of fairy tales, and the story-teller so absorbing that the time slipped by unheeded. It was the Fat Man who seemed like the true Repository of Universal Knowledge. He was surrounded by an aura of wisdom and benignity, and withal he could take the time from his important duties, the mysteries of masculine "business"—a sacred word to her simple mind—to sit down and entertain a tired-out drudge of a woman like her! The recital came to pall on the restless nine after a time, and somewhere during "Melancthon," "Meridian" or "Measles" they melted away, and left her to enjoy it all uninterrupted and unafraid. She did not always catch the thread; in fact, the jump from one subject to another was too sudden and complete for her jaded memory to follow, but she sunned herself in the warmth of kindly amiability, the deferential and unconsciously protecting manner of the agent, as he mopped his forehead and extolled the book. When he rose at last to go she felt a distinct pang of regret, as though he were "steady company." At the thought she blushed as prettily as though she were twenty instead of forty.

"I'm real sorry," she faltered at the door, "but I don't see how I ever could afford it."

"You hev' got a good many children," he allowed, thoughtfully.

"Oh, sakes!" she exclaimed, with a smile that smoothed out the care wrinkles, and puckered the crow's-feet pleasantly, "I ain't got no children! These is all my brother's, left motherless, you know, 'cept the biggest boy and the girl out there on the gatepost. Them are my daughter's. She died two years ago, and her husband fetched 'em to me. Then, when brother's wife went last fall, he sent for me, bein' I was a widder, and

nothin' must do but I must come and keep house for him. I had to fetch my two grandchildren. I dunno as it works very good, either," she ended, with a troubled look.

There was something undefinably sweet and winning in her faded face. The agent couldn't for the life of him have told what it was, but it smote him to the heart, or the place where that organ had once lodged. He hadn't found use for a heart in a good many wandering years as a book agent.

"I'll drop in again," he said, "you ain't bound to buy," in answer to a deprecatory look on her face. "I'm comin' because I'd enjoy to. I'm to be round hereabouts for some time yet."

As he went down the path he noticed that the small figure still occupied the gatepost.

"I guess you didn't sell anything, did you?"

"No," he answered, making ready to get in, and smiling back toward her; "but I'm comin' back in a day or so!" She laughed elfishly.

"Well, you needn't. Nobody ever buys anythin' here. Grandma's too poor, an' Jim's too mean."

"Jim?"

"I have to call him uncle w'en he's round. W'en he ain't I call him Jim."

Clattering along the dusty road the agent reflected deeply, and beneath all his thoughts was a persistent vision of Grandma-and-Aunt-Lib, with her bent, tired figure, and her kind blue eyes. He was no longer young, and he had a bald path over the top of his head. Not at all a romantic person, but then, neither was she, and yet an equally pervasive remembrance of his pleasant voice and the deference of his ways went about with her in her journey through the never-ending work. To "do" for such a family alone and unassisted was the Augean task of her waking hours, and the haunting nightmare of her sleep. She knew it was more than her share, as on the dead sister-in-law's side was an old maid aunt, and also a grandmother equally near. There was no call for Jim to foist the burden off on her already overlaid shoulders when his wife had "folks," but of what use to murmur? She was made out of that pliant material that constitutes the natural slave. She was born to wear chains, and Jim was a willing slave-driver. The Fat Man driving along the road wondered vaguely how she'd look puttering about that little cabin of his

on a Florida river, where each winter, after his book canvassing was finished he went to hunt and fish and cultivate oranges. Perhaps the real reason of his sudden attraction could have been found in a resemblance of which he was but dimly aware. Down at the bottom of an old chest in the Florida house was a daguerreotype, out of whose frame looked a woman clad in voluminous skirts, obviously extended by a hoop. There was a bertha folded about her drooping, narrow shoulders, and from beneath the sleek brown hair brushed low at the side of the head, hung long, swinging earrings, touched up by the photographer with burnished gilt, as was likewise the wedding ring on her finger where it rested awkwardly on the shoulder of the Fat Man—a slim young man then—seated beside her. It was a poorly taken, rustic effort, this old picture, and the face of the girl was plain to ugliness, but it was a treasure in the eyes of its owner, for the figure in its old fashioned gown, the wedding ring on the finger where he had placed it, had been lying these thirty years beneath the sod of a New Hampshire graveyard. Grandma-and-Aunt-Lib had looked at him out of the eyes of that daguerreotype, and awakened within him a long-slumbering sentiment.

The Repository of Universal Knowledge grew to be an absorbing interest in the life of this poor little drudge of a woman as the weeks went by, and the book agent dismounted at regular intervals to expound its glories.

Jim stormed and raged when he heard from the children of these visits in his absence, thereby frightening his sister into a half-resolve to shut the door on the disapproved intruder. But it was not easy to deny the Fat Man. He had the children on his side, and they swarmed all over him and his horse and the buggy, while the little consumptive kept faithful watch for his approach. At last it came to a crisis as matters of that kind are bound to do. It was the first week in September. The book agent's sales had thriven well, and he felt that it was not possible for him to justify his remaining in the neighborhood any longer. Every house of the well-to-do for miles around was supplied with the Repository of Universal Knowledge, and there remained to him but one last transaction before departure, to settle his affair with Grandma-and-Aunt-Lib. As he hitched his horse before the brown house he noticed the unwonted silence. No troops of noisy boys to greet him, and no faithful watcher on the gatepost. Then he remembered that

school had opened, and he rejoiced at the thought that he should have his final courting to himself, uninterrupted. As he knocked in vain on the front door he began to have misgiv-



ings, and then the lady of the gatepost came peeping around the corner of the house.

"Grandma ain't a-going to let you in this time."

"Bless my soul!" cried the Fat Man, "and why not?"

"'Cause she's went like a fool and promised Jim she wouldn't. She can't come out, neither; promised that, too—she's cryin' now in the back kitchen."

"I'll go round that way, then," and he stepped down resolutely, but the child shook the red hair all about her face in vigorous protest. "She said you musn't—she won't let you in that way, neither. She's locked all the doors. Oh, she'll keep her promise, will Grandma!" She spoke bitterly, as if she would have been bound by no such puerile considerations.

"Say, little un," said he with sudden determination, "you run around and tell her I come a-purpose to ask her to marry me! Tell her I ain't going to take any 'no' for an answer, neither. Tell her I mean to fetch you away with her, too"—the little girl's face lighted up rapturously. "Now, make tracks and be quick about it, for I ain't got any too much time!"

The small legs fairly twinkled in their glad haste, but presently came back laggingly.

"I talked to her through the sink-room winder," she panted, "but it wasn't no use, she says she can't! Now, ain't that just devilish? She's afraid o' Jim, that's wot!"

"Well, I ain't. Looker here, you run back and tell her I'll take her right off to-day,—you and her!"

There was a second pattering on the stone walk and then the child's tones could be heard in shrill expostulation, and at last the reply was delivered to him in half tearful and raging disappointment.

"Oh, she won't—she won't never give in to do it! She says she can't leave all the children—now ain't it mean? But, say, I'll go anyway. I hate it here, I hate Jim! He's nasty mean to Grandma, an' he slaps me. Pa sent for my brother Bob yesterday, but she wouldn't let me go 'way from her. Wasn't I mad, though! Oh, it's too mean!"

The Fat Man deliberated during this breathless harangue. It was impossible to conduct the campaign thus at long range. It was equally foreign to his purpose to give up the battle and acknowledge defeat. He hit on a plan, and took one hand out of his pocket to slap his leg. The child watched him eagerly.

"Are we goin'?" she asked with an anxious breath.

"You bet!" said the Fat Man resolutely. "Now you do just exactly what I tell you. Run round and tell her to let you in. Tell her I won't go inside the house, hope-to-die, nor ask her to step her foot out of it, but she must come and open the front room window so I can tell her good-bye from the porch. Then you run upstairs and get her bonnet and a frock and some—well, some things for her and you, and be packin' 'em quick under the buggy seat—now run!"

The Fat Man drew up a piazza chair and seated himself outside the window where poor Aunt-Lib-and-Grandma presently showed her swelled eyes and nose reddened by long weeping.

"Hyst the sash," said he tenderly, "you ain't any call to be afraid er me, you know."

Then began the strange wooing. All the arguments and allurements his long experience as a book agent had taught him to use in breaking a purpose, he used in vain. At the pictures he drew of the pleasures and plenty in the Florida cabin through the long winter, she cried afresh with only an added sense of renunciation. Especially was she moved to grief over the renouncing of the promised health and healing for the lit-

the granddaughter. That young person was now engaged in stuffing an indiscriminate mass of personal effects under the seat in preparation for the journey, but the buggy could not be seen from where the woman sat. The Fat Man observed the child's efforts, and took a little more time. As for the boys, he said, the responsibility wasn't on her. Let their own grandmother, and their old maid aunt come and take a turn at it. Now that the one that was her grandson had gone back to his father, if she took the little girl, it was all she ought to do. She had as good a right to be happy as any one else, and as far as he could make out, she had never had any show at it, always working her finger-ends off for other people. Then there was the wedding trip, driving part way, and part way by steamer—oh, it would be fine! There was a sight of the world she hadn't seen, and the Repository of Universal Knowledge wasn't a patch on it for bein' interestin'! but she shook her head with the obstinate resolve of weak natures when they do make a stand. She should 'er loved to done it. There was no use denyin' it, though she blushed fiery red at the admission. She'd 'er gone ef it hadn't ben Jim got that promise off her not to let him in and not to step one step over the door sill. She could not budge. The book agent held her work-hardened hand across the window sill as reverently as any knight of old could have done, and a very chivalrous resolve was in his heart. He was watching the proceedings at the buggy, where the small girl had, with infinite effort and pains, lifted and put in the front a carpet stool, and now sat perched upon it ready for the start. He took from his pocket a small writing pad and pencil, and began with his disengaged hand to write on his knee. Then, with the one hand, he dexterously folded and addressed the page, and drawing a pin from under the edge of his vest, he pinned it to the window blind. His next performance filled the soul of Grandma-and-Aunt-Lib with glad horror. He rose stiffly to his feet and, leaning in over the sill of the window, he kissed her squarely on her tremulous lips.

"Now, Libby," he said solemnly, "a promise is a promise, and not to be broken. I understand how you feel about it, for I've got one to tend to myself. I promised myself the very day I first set eyes on you 't I'd have you for better for worse, and I ain't goin' back on myself. Now, you can't come out through the door, but there ain't any agreement 'bout the winder, and you can't walk out of your own free will, but there



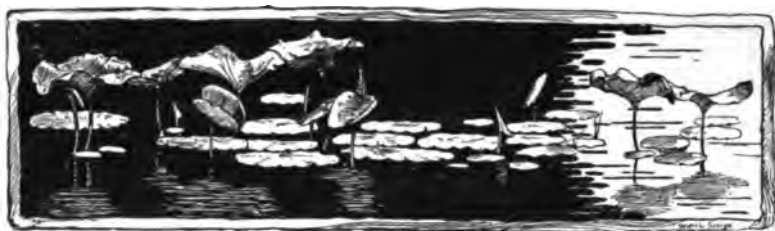
ain't no agreement 'bout my will, and what I'm goin' to do is to just carry you out by main strength and run off with you—like or lump, how's that?"

Suiting the action to this announcement he lifted her with terrible panting and straining clear through the open window to the porch, and staggered away with her down the path. She gave an unresisting little shriek, and then, truth compels the confession that she clasped her arms about his neck and helped him by keeping a good, close hold. As they rattled off down the road Grandma-and-Aunt-Lib tied on the bonnet they fished out for her from under the seat, and folded herself resignedly in a decent shawl, which adjustments to circumstances the Fat Man regarded with chuckles of satisfaction.

"Never thought I should elope with two ladies at once," he said, as he pulled a lock of the red hair at his knees teasingly, "but when I set out to do anything I'm a hustler, you bet!"

The tiny figure on the stool nestled back contentedly. "Mercy to us," she sighed with delight, "ain't it goin' to be splendid!"





RANGANI'S LUCK *

BY ERNEST INGERSOLL.



THE sun was only just gilding the crowns of the tallest palms of the jungle where the monkeys were climbing among the topmost twigs to warm their ears in its rays and search for breakfast. One or two jungle-cocks, up in the rocky nullah, were still to be heard crowing good morning to each other, and the bubbling notes of wild bulbuls were answered from many a cage in the little native village, while fields of young rice and sugar-cane half a mile lower down the valley would soon glow like a sheet of emerald.

Down the hill through a winding path in the thick woods three young villagers, bare-footed and bare-armed, were coming to their work in the fields, humming a quaint song as they walked. The chant of the leader suddenly stopped, and he pointed to the ground.

"A tiger!" he exclaimed; but the others knew the footprints as well as he, and each man turned his eyes over his shoulder and bent his ears to the whispering jungle, for the great beast, dreaded of all men, might be right beside them.

The tracks were many hours old, however, and the claw-marks pointed up the nullah, so the men went on without much fear; but there was no more singing until they were free of the shadowy path and out into the open space at the edge of the cane-fields. Here they sat down to smoke their pipes a few moments and wait until others came to the day's work.

*Written for Short Stories.

"Did you hear the tale the Fakeer was telling at Father Latchoumana's last night?" asked Rangani, a powerful young Tamil, who had been the first to see the tracks, and who was a wonder to his friends for courage, though that need not praise him very highly, for these farmers and cow-herders of Madras are a timid folk.

"No," he was answered. "We could not stay there. They told me a 'cheeta' was prowling about my goats, and I asked Chama here to go with me and help light fires and beat a drum to scare him away."

"Huh!" Rangani grunted, in deep contempt for their fears. "Well, he told us that over toward Kistnagiri, on the other side of the hills, the people knew of a tiger that growled around the village every night. They built a trap for him, setting up a great slab of stone on some sticks and fixing a bait, so that when the tiger seized the meat he would pull out the sticks and the stone would fall and smash him as if an elephant had kneeled on him twice."

"Why could not we make such a trap?" asked Rangani.

"Perhaps we could; but it would not be worth while, for a tiger does not come here once a year."

"No; that is true. I have not seen any tracks since last summer until this morning," said Vardapa, the second man of the trio. "But go on with your story."

"The next morning after sunrise—but wait. I will try to tell it as the Fakeer did, so that you may feel surprise. The good man—may the sweet mahua flowers bloom over his bones!—was at the English sahib's post, about ten miles away, where the collector and his clerks are; and when the sun was about three hours high there came a few villagers, who brought upon a bamboo a dead tiger and laid it down at the Sahib's tent, and began to tell him how they had taken it in a trap, and so on. The Sahib did not listen long, but commanded his men to skin the beast and to pay them the government reward; and his clerk gave to the men forty rupees and then they went away."

"Forty rupees! 'Ai,' that is a lot of money!" cried Charma.

"Yes," said Rangani with a deep sigh. "It is—it is. Half of that would give me all that my heart longs for."

"Well, is that all?" asked Vardapa, arousing Rangani from his sighing.

"No; good and bad luck go together. An hour afterward

another lot of men came running in from the forest, and all began to shout at once for justice, saying that it was they who had set the trap, and that the first men had found the tiger in it, and had stolen it to get the reward wrongfully. This was true. But nobody knew who the thieves were, or where they belonged, and so the poor owners of the trap fed with rupees the jackals of another village!"

The two listeners laughed at this tale until the mina-birds out in the paddy-field heard them and flew away; but Rangani only sighed, and refused to see any fun in it, or in anything else.

"'Ai, ai,'" he lamented, "if only I could get some of that silver! 'Ai, ai'!"

Just then a lad came running down the path, calling to the men.

"A soldier has come from the Sahib, ordering all the men in the village to go and help build a bridge which the flood has broken, but the headman says you three are not to go, but must stay here and draw water to-day, for the crops need it badly."

So they knocked the ashes out of their pipes and walked on together to the well.

This well was more truly a square cistern, or bowrie, cut in the hard ground and lined with clay and rocks, making a smooth, hard wall, through which the water could not leak; and it was fed by the rains and a rivulet, but the latter was dry most of the year.

Such cisterns are common all over Central and Southern India, and are sometimes of great size, and constructed of careful masonry, and these are called tanks. In them is stored up the water that falls in the rainy season for use in irrigating the rice-fields during the long months of drouth. This was a poor little village, and its community-fields were only a few acres in extent, so that the bowrie here was small and cheap; nevertheless the water in it was six or eight feet deep, even when, as now, the cistern was only half full.

Above its edge hung an "ettam"—one of the quaint contrivances by which the Hindoos lift water. Two strong posts, connected near the top by a cross-bar, were set firmly in the soil near the edge of the cistern; and resting upon the cross-bar, about fourteen feet above the ground, was laid a heavy spar, so balanced that its ends would swing up and down like

a seesaw. One end of this spar reached out over the cistern, and there hung from it, by a rope, a metal bucket as big as a large barrel.

The men laid aside their coats, or whatever answered to a coat, and began to work. Rangani and Vardapa climbed rapidly up one of the posts, in whose sides were notches convenient for their bare feet, and perched themselves upon the spar, while Charma seized the bucket and swung it out over the bowrie, where its weight tipped and sank it down into the water. As soon as it was full the two men on the spar walked out toward the landward end until their weight bore down that end of this big lever and lifted the full bucket up above the surface, where Charma had only to push it far enough toward one side to tip the water into a trough, whence it ran away down into the irrigating channels, and thence spread among the thirsty plants.

This was not hard work, and it went on steadily while the sun climbed higher and higher in the dome of the sky, and the innumerable sounds of the tropical jungle in the early morning had ceased one by one. The bucket went down with a splash, the two men walked away along the beam until it came down and the bucket grated harshly on the stones of the curb; then the water gurgled and rippled away through the troughs, and the "ettam" creaked again as the bucket was returned to the tank. Finally these were the only sounds heard, for the heat of the approaching noonday was hushing the wilderness.

At last Charma declared that he was weary of his part, and that after they had smoked a pipeful of betel and tobacco he would go up on the spar and Rangani might take his place at the well.

When they were squatting in the shadow of a tamarind bush, enjoying their rest, Vardapa noticed the gloom on the face of his friend, and said to him:

"Brother Rangani, why are you so sad to-day? What troubles you? You do nothing but sigh, and we have not once heard you boast of how you could twist out the horn of a bull gaur, if you cared to."

"Ai, ai'!" cried that hero, "I do not care for anything now, because I am so poor."

"How is that? And why do you talk of poverty? All of us are poor, and some much worse off than you."

"That is nothing. A man is not poor until he covets some-

thing that he cannot buy. I have no money to purchase from her parents the wife my heart longs for, and I am as one lost in the deepest jungle.

"Do you know," he went on, after a moment's sympathetic silence, "Adja—that jewel in the ring—that flower in the garden—of Father Latchoumana? My eyes have dwelt upon her as she came and went with the goats; and last night I watched her as she sat apart with the women while the Fakeer was talking to us. I knew that happiness would never sit as a welcome guest in my heart until I could take her away to my own house and see her tending the goats, and going to and coming from the well with watering, and gathering sticks for the fire, for me!"

"Did you speak to her father?" Vardapa asked.

"Yes; but it is of no use. He says he must have two cows for her."

"Two cows!" exclaimed the men in chorus. "Why didn't he say two elephants—two rubies!"

Each felt that there was no help for the despairing and disconsolate lover if the girl was held at such a value as that; although, privately, they did not think she was worth it. They advised him to wait a while, expressing the opinion that the price would fall; but this was of no comfort as a sentiment and useless as advice, because he had not enough money to buy even a calf, not to speak of two milch-cows, nor to mention the cost of the wedding feasts. So there was really nothing to be said or done, and they went back to their duty, the two comrades climbing up to move the spar, while Rangani stayed below. They were walking back and forth, ~~seesawing~~ the beam and droning out together, in time to its creaking, that waterman's song which all India sings at such labor, when—

Flash! A great yellow body sprang at the man by the well.

None of the three saw the tiger until he was on the point of leaping; but, perhaps, Rangani perceived the danger an instant sooner than the others, for he found time to swing around and throw himself down a little out of the way. Perhaps, too, the men on the spar made some motion, in their alarm, that moved the beam and bucket, which rested empty on the edge of the bowrie, just ready to go down. At any rate, the tiger found its iron rim in his grasp instead of sinking his claws into a man's shoulder. Now the stroke of his paws and the weight of his body together were enough almost to topple

the big bucket over the edge, but not quite; and doubtless the great agile cat, clutching at the ground frantically with his hind legs, would finally have recovered his balance, had not Rangani, true to his bold nature, picked himself up, rushed to the opposite side of the bucket, where his face was within a yard of those burning eyeballs and frothing fangs, and given it a push with all his strength. That impetus alone was needed, and down went the tiger with a rush that nearly hurled the frightened men off the beam, and struck the water with an immense souse and a horrible scream that sent Rangani scrambling up to the very top of the posts, for he had exhausted the last drop of his valor in that grand effort of boldness—done before he thought.

Now the animal went swimming round and round in the tank, whining, snarling, and clawing at the stonework in a frantic attempt to find some way up the smooth walls.

All the men were scared and excited almost out of their wits, but finally gathered nerve enough to lift out the bucket, for fear the brute might try to climb the rope; and at last, when they saw he was quite unable to get out of the tank, they descended from their perches. Then they squatted on the curbing, and while the poor, beautiful beast struggled round and round his fatal death-pen they showered upon him all the elaborate abuse of himself, his ancestors and his progeny, which constitutes the invective of the East; and having thus relieved their minds they began to hurl sharp stones at his head.

Suddenly Rangani sprang to his feet, and, yelling wild shouts at the top of his voice, began to clap his hands, dance, spin round, leap and down, and act like a mad Dervish. His companions forgot their foe, and gazed at him in amazement, until they caught the burden of his song:

“‘Ai, ai!’ The king of the tigers is slain. He will be drowned. I killed him, I, Rangani! The Sahib will give me a reward—me, Rangani! Forty rupees will he bestow upon me, and I shall buy cows as white as milk, and I shall give them to Father Latchoumana, and the beautiful Adja—she with the grace of the ‘chousingha,’ whose hair is like the crest of the pucras gleaming at dawn—she, whose eyes outshine the orbs of the chital, and whose breath is sought of all the bees in the jungle—she will be mine, mine! for I am Rangani, the brave one, and I have killed the tiger this day!”

THE CRICKET *

BY JEAN RAMEAU



SMALL, slender person, with a fresh complexion, and a body and limbs so diminutive that they seemed a reduced copy of those of an ordinary woman, but possessed of a pair of large black eyes which sent the blood to the head of those upon whom she turned them—such was Noeline Fargues, the young mistress of the mill of Espibos. A ramshackle old structure, built a-straddle of a brook, isolated in a grove of alders, leaning to one side, dilapidated, eaten away by the ivy that covered it, supported here and there by large beams that looked like crutches, but endowed with an alert and joyous clatter which made it resemble a talkative peasant woman—such was the home of Noeline, the old mill of Espibos.

The mill, decrepit as it was, had its faithful customers; its mistress, though small, had a goodly number of lovers.

Among these two were chiefly to be distinguished Aristide Larriussec, a big, chubby-cheeked fellow, the son of a neighboring farmer, and Jouanin Lacaze, a fair-haired youth, who was serving in the quality of an apprentice at the largest shop of the neighboring village.

Aristide, the farmer, often prowled around the mill, his pockets full of fruit for the object of his affections. The two ate it together, seated in front of the millstone, while the iron wheel turned by the water sang its unceasing rhythmic song, and the white flour fell silently, covering everything around as with a frosting of sugar.

Jouanin the shopkeeper was less fortunate. He hardly saw

* Translated by Mary A. Robinson, from the French, for Short Stories.

Noeline except on Sundays, after mass, when she came to buy needles and thread at the shop in the village. At such times Jouanin was flushed with joy. He displayed before the kind eyes of the young girl, all the spools of thread and all the papers of needles which the shop contained, and a long time was spent in making a selection, while occasionally the fingers of the two touched each other, in the midst of the articles they were handling.

Sometimes, too, of a Sunday evening, Jouanin would obtain a couple of hours' leave of absence, and bring his rod and line to fish in the brook of Espibos. He hardly ever caught anything, because the brook contained fewer fish than any other in the neighborhood; but Jouanin would choose his position so that he could watch, at the same time, the windows of the mill and the float of his fishing-line. He consoled himself for the immobility of the latter by looking at the charming things which were to be seen at the former.

At nightfall, Noeline would generally come to look for her ducks on the banks of the brook, and the grasp of the hand which the lovers exchanged in that Sabbath twilight was so sweet that Jouanin dreamed of it till the following Thursday.

The mistress of the mill had no hesitation in choosing among her lovers; it was Jouanin whom she preferred to all the others. She hardly thought of anything but him. Him alone she trusted entirely, with him alone she felt perfectly happy.

Fair-haired Jouanin was therefore authorized to pay his court, and Noeline's mother soon invited him to come and eat chestnuts at the mill during the long autumn evenings.

The first time, however, that the young shopkeeper went to visit his sweetheart, a strange thing happened. The cricket which always chirped behind the kitchen chimney remained silent.

"That is singular," thought Noeline's mother.

And the young girl, on her part, turned quite pale.

And when Jouanin came for his second visit, the same thing happened. As soon as the wooer opened the door the cricket ceased chirping.

Upon this Noeline's mother crossed herself, and her daughter clasped her trembling hands beneath her apron.

Every time that Jouanin entered the house the hostile cricket refused to let itself be heard, and in listening closely

one could hear a peculiar sound, an inexplicable scratching in the chimney, as if the little creature were revolting.

Noeline cried a good deal, her mother was much depressed.

Like the majority of peasant women they both attached great importance to the chirping of their cricket. They were aware that the song of one of those insects in a house ensures to its inhabitants happiness and prosperity. The fact of its remaining silent whenever Jouanin was present was regarded as a sure sign that the poor lad would bring misfortune upon any one who had anything to do with him.

And yet Noeline knew very well that her lover was good, honest, and industrious; she thought she could read many promises of happiness in his loving gray eyes; but the cricket did not agree with her. It might have proved dangerous not to heed its warning, and when the timid shopkeeper came, with bowed head and a lump in his throat, to ask Noeline's mother for her daughter's hand, the old woman looked very grave, and the girl could hardly refrain from sobbing in her apron. Jouanin was rejected. He was not given the true reason. It would have troubled him to learn that he brought bad luck to a house that he entered.

The mother gave him plenty of probable pretexts, and Noeline escaped from the room to hide her grief. She went and sat down by the millstone, in the old dilapidated mill, listened to the drops of water falling over the great iron wheel, and when she heard Jouanin closing the door as he left the house to return home by the alder-grove, along the murmuring brook, she thought her heart would stop beating in her breast, and she prayed to God aloud, as if she had been in fear of death.

The following week Jouanin left the country. With his clothes tied in a handkerchief, he went off during a cold twilight, when the last leaves seemed shivering on the trees. He entered the alder-grove, and went along the brook of Espibos. The young mistress of the mill saw him coming, and remained standing motionless at her door.

"Good evening, Noeline," he said slowly.

"Good evening, Jouanin," she replied, lowering her eyes.

Then, as he went on, she ventured to ask:

"So you are going to leave the country?"

He seemed to stumble a little on the path covered with leaves.

"Yes; I have found a place at Orthez."

She said nothing. Unconsciously she turned and twisted between her fingers a small silver cross that hung at her throat, and, with dim, troubled eyes, she watched Jouanin as he went, in the increasing darkness, through the silent woods.

A small, slight person, bent, with the lean body and limbs of a wornout old woman, but still possessed of a pair of expressive eyes far younger than the face of which they formed a part—such was Noeline Fargues, the mistress of the mill of Espibos twenty-five years after the departure of Jouanin Lacaze. The peasant women of the South of France fade rapidly.

A-straddle of the brook, as of old, the mill still held its own, thanks to several supplementary crutches, and its clatter was as merry as that of a new one.

Noeline Fargues had not married. Jouanin gone, no other lover had succeeded in touching her heart. Aristide Larrieussec, ardent though he was, had been discarded like all the rest. The young farmer, long inconsolable, had finally married a girl from the neighborhood. At the present day he visited his old sweetheart only for the purpose of selling her his grain. They had both probably forgotten the delicious fruit they had eaten together by the millstone long ago, while the white flour fell silently, dusting every object around them.

Jouanin, for his part, had never returned.

Many a time Noeline had wandered along the brook, in the innocent hope of seeing the young shopkeeper appear before her. She had thought of him nearly every day; and almost every night, when the cricket sang she grew sad, and sat dreaming by her lonely fireside, until the resin candle had burned itself out.

Alas! Orthez was so far away! The people of Espibos never go to that town. At the shop in the village no one had heard anything about Jouanin. What had become of the fair-haired young apprentice? Noeline still prayed for him from time to time, when her poor soul was sadder than usual, and, by degrees, in the hollow breast of the lonely peasant woman, the beatings of her heart became cold and monotonous, like the clatter of her poor old mill.

One moonlight evening Noeline, who was then forty-two years old, was expecting Larrieussec, Jouanin's former rival.

He was coming to sell her his corn, and to discuss the price. Noeline had offered twelve francs and five sous for the bag. The farmer had asked twelve francs and fifteen sous. It was nearly nine o'clock. The night was warm, the moon cast its white light on the winding path through the grove. Noeline, standing on the threshold of the mill, saw some one approaching.

"That is not Larrieussec," she thought. "He does not come that way."

The unknown had a square box on his back. He walked slowly, seemed fatigued, and, as if he were a stranger, looked closely at the brook, the mill, the trees of the grove.

"Good evening, my good woman," he said, as he stopped. "Would you like to see Our Lady of Lourdes?"

He was evidently a pedlar from the Bearn or the Bigourde, one of those traveling salesmen from Pau or Bagnères, who, under the pretext of showing a statuette of the Virgin, which they carry at the bottom of their box, sell to the country people rosaries, medals, as well as needles and thread.

"My poor fellow, it is rather dark for looking at your Virgin."

However, as the pedlar's voice sounded gentle, and as the Virgin's intercession might possibly induce Larrieussec to lower his price to twelve francs five sous, Noeline continued:

"Come in, salesman! I will look at your Virgin by the light of our resin."

So the pedlar followed her into the mill. When Noeline could see his face she felt the blood rushing to her thin cheeks, and when the salesman looked at her he seemed equally disturbed. At last, in rather a plaintive voice, the man asked:

"So you still live here, Noeline?"

"Oh, heavens!" replied the mistress of the mill, her heart throbbing violently, "is it possible that it is you, Jouanin?"

And for a moment they remained silent.

The water of the brook fell, in resounding drops, on the iron wheel of the mill, as it had done long ago, when the young shopkeeper courted the girl he loved. And suddenly, behind the chimney-piece, was heard the clear chirp of a cricket.

Noeline felt a slight prickling in her eyes, which seemed like the birth of a tear.

Jouanin told her of his life. He had succeeded well at Orthez. He had married there, he had had children, he had a

shop there, and, at the present day, he and his family were happy. Only, he had felt a desire to see his old home once more, after twenty-five years of absence, and, from economical reasons, he had made the journey as a pedlar, selling thread, needles, and other cheap wares.

"Oh, I was quite sure you would succeed, Jouanin!" said Noeline, with a sigh.

The cricket was still chirping behind the fireplace. The mistress of the mill seemed overcome by a growing emotion.

"Well, then," stammered Jouanin, "will you tell me, Noeline, why you would not marry me twenty-five years ago?"

She could not answer at first. She pointed to the chimney with a shamefaced gesture, feeling tempted to hide her face in her apron, as she had been wont to do in her youth.

"It was because of the cricket," she confessed.

"The cricket?"

"Yes; I was a fool! I thought you would bring me bad luck—the cricket stopped chirping whenever you came to see me."

"It stopped chirping? And why?"

Noeline shrugged her thin shoulders to indicate that she did not know. And they both remained thoughtful. Their eyes did not dare meet in the light of the smoking resin.

Before long, however, Larrieussec, the farmer, whom Noeline had been expecting, made his appearance.

"Good evening! I salute you!" he said, after the manner of the peasants, who give as many greetings as there are persons in the company.

And when he had recognized the young shopkeeper of old he cried:

"What, Jouanin, you here? What the deuce did you come for?"

"I came to talk over old times. That does one good at our age."

"Yes, indeed," replied Larrieussec. "The good old times! By the way, did not you and Noeline think of getting married in those days?"

"You are right," remarked the mistress of the mill.

"And do you know what prevented us?" asked the pedlar. "A cricket!"

"Pshaw! A cricket?" exclaimed Larrieussec. "But, let me think—I remember now——" He burst out laughing.

"Oh, that was a good joke!" he cried. "A good joke indeed!"

Then he went on seriously:

"Bah! You are happy, are you not, both of you? We are all happy here! So there will be no harm in confessing the little tricks of our youth. Ah, that was a capital one! Listen, Jouanin: We are as good friends as ever, are we not, old boy? Very well. It was because I watched you, and scratched the outside of the chimney there, toward our field, every time you came to court Noeline. You see, you were not the only fellow who was in love with her, and I know some one who was horribly jealous of you!"

Then seeing that this revelation had a chilling effect on his auditors, and that Noeline's eyes rested on him sadly, he said, very generously:

"But that isn't all. I came to tell you that I accept your price, twelve francs five sous a bag. Will that do, Noeline?"

And Noeline answered, in a low tone:

"It will do, Larrieussec."

Upon this the farmer bought some spools of thread for his wife of the merchant of Orthez, and paid for them at once, without haggling.

"Adieu! I salute you!" he said as he left.

The two old lovers remained alone.

They did not say much. Jouanin slowly rearranged his wares. Noeline watched him, while unconsciously turning and twisting the old silver cross, which still hung at her throat, between her poor misshapen and bony fingers. For a moment, quite weak and despairing, she felt tempted to imprint a kiss upon Jouanin's grizzled hair, once so fine and so fair, but she restrained herself. Her lips were too old to bestow a caress upon a man.

"Well, then, good-night, Noeline!" said the pedlar, lifting his box to his shoulders.

"Good night, Jouanin!"

They shook hands in some embarrassment, and then separated.

He followed the moonlit path through the grove. She, standing at the door of the mill, looked after him, while, behind the chimney-piece, the cricket chirped, calmly, clearly, indefatigably, as if it would have told Noeline of all the happiness which might have been hers.



ARCADES AMBO*

BY HENRY MARTLEY

MY elder sister Monica possesses a mission in life. What its exact nature may be I do not know, nor, I think, does she; but it has always been an axiom in the family that the mission exists. At present it has taken no more extended form than desultory visiting in the village and teaching in the Sunday school. At times she has hankered either for work among the heathen or for hospital nursing; but the visions are both so attractive that she has been unable to decide between them, apart from such minor difficulties as an inevitable parental veto and the practical discomforts of either pursuit. The result is that her village ministrations are inadequate, and she is compelled to fill up her time with domestic well-doing. Personally I did not suffer much from her improving influence. While I was still in the schoolroom, I fancy that I did regard her with awe, and mother on grave occasions used to send her to talk seriously to me, much as I had been dosed for physical ailments in earlier days. For quite ten minutes afterward I would be seized with exalted ambitions to be worthy of the place in life which Monica explained a woman ought to fill.

Lately, however, I had been emancipated, and Monica in despair had ceased even to upbraid me with that unutterably wistful gaze of hers. Good advice had become a thing of the past some time before the gaze. I am sure I was to blame for neglecting such excellent opportunities, but a face like a Madonna's and an aureole of golden hair are thrown away on a younger sister. Besides, she had found plenty of raw material

*From "Chambers's Journal."

without requisitioning me. I had almost lost count of the number of young men whose nobler feelings she had roused. Why she chose them almost exclusively as her proselytes was a question which uncharitable people might debate. Of course, young men may need improvement more than women or elderly men; but at the same time I think they should have been made to understand the nature of the proceedings more clearly than they did. In the course of becoming high-souled they had a habit of proposing to Monica, and she was compelled to dismiss them with an air of benediction. For a day or two she would go about with the martyred air of the misunderstood. They departed with an awe-stricken expression, as though they had laughed in church.

Most of the young men were comparatively strangers, including a large percentage of curates. I do not say this by way of innuendo, but simply to explain why I was annoyed when Monica applied herself to the task of improving George Ingram. We had known Mr. Ingram as a boy; and, though we had not seen much of him for some years, he was still, when after his father's death he settled down near us, a nice boy who needed no improvement. Monica, however, took him in hand. What was the precise form of spiritual malady which she discovered in him I did not know, but the regeneration went its usual course. For a month or so he was much interested in the discussion of the higher idealities in their application to himself. Then the violet eyes and wavy hair took effect, and he began to display the accustomed symptoms of misunderstanding Monica. The time seemed ripe for the parting benediction. What puzzled me was that it was so long in coming. Perhaps he was an unusually interesting patient; but—I admit it ought not to have occurred to me—the other young men had not been exactly eligible, and Mr. Ingram was a young man whom more worldly people than Monica might have regarded as materially acceptable.

Matters were in this condition when George passed the lawn one afternoon after a protracted interview with Monica. He was looking unutterably dejected when he appeared, and it was not until he had nearly reached the gate that he sighted me. Then, after a moment's hesitation, he turned back.

"Miss Kitty," he began dismally, "do you mind my talking to you?"

"I have no very violent objection," I said.

"Well," he went on, "you understand what it's about, of course?"

"You look," I said, "as if it was cholera—very bad cholera. Is it?"

"Please don't laugh at me. It's—well, you must have noticed—it's Monica—Miss Ellis, I mean," he explained with a gulp.

"You're—er——?" I said.

"Yes," he answered; "and, of course, it's quite hopeless, quite useless. It is quite hopeless, isn't it, Miss Kitty?"

"I haven't any idea," I replied. "Was that what you came to ask me about?"

"I thought you might know," he said. "You can't tell me at all?"

"Not in the least."

"She's—she's an angel," he remarked.

"Several people have said that," I agreed.

"Of course, they have," he said enthusiastically, "and I'm—what do you think of me candidly, Miss Kitty?"

"Well, candidly," I replied, "I think you're a fool."

"A fool? Why do you say that?" he asked, with some indignation. It is annoying to be called a fool when you want to be considered an irredeemable castaway.

"Mooncalf perhaps expresses it better," I said.

"Mooncalf?" he exclaimed.

"Yes," I observed; "a young creature who moons about."

"I thought perhaps you'd be nice about it," he murmured, preparing to go.

"So I am," I said. "I'm telling you some useful home-truths. Doesn't even Monica do that, too?"

"Yes," he admitted; "but then, you see, she sympathizes with one. She's wonderfully sympathetic."

"She is," I agreed again; "she's susceptible to almost any emotion."

"What do you mean?" he inquired.

"Will you listen to my advice—as it's meant?" I asked.

"Yes," he said doubtfully.

"Well," I went on, "do you know the strongest emotion in an angel—like Monica?"

"Religion?" he suggested reverentially.

"No—jealousy," I said.

"Jealousy?" he answered in a puzzled way. "Do you really mean if I—er—er——?"

"Exactly," I said. "There have been several mooncalves before you, and mooning doesn't pay."

"Several others?" he exclaimed with some warmth.

"A whole drove of them," I said, "and they've come and gone."

"Several, have there? But it sounds so preposterous. Do you really think that she'd mind if I and some other girl——? She wouldn't mind, I expect, would she? I don't see how she could. If she didn't care at all for me it wouldn't matter to her."

"No," I said; "but it might make her care for you. I also am a woman—though a little lower than the angels. It's good advice, but you can take it or leave it."

"If it really was any good," he faltered; "but I couldn't—after all she's done for me. It would be dishonorable."

"Very well," I said.

"But, Miss Kitty," he began again, "do you really think it might make some difference?"

"Oh, young man, young man," I exclaimed with impatience, "does a girl care most for a man when he's making little of himself to her, or when another girl's making much of him?"

"Thank you very much," he said, "but I couldn't. Thank you all the same. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," I answered.

"And where's the other girl?" he went on, still waiting irresolutely.

"Oh, you must find her yourself," I said.

"There are so few girls about here," he suggested.

"There are several nice girls."

"But the other girl—what would she think?" he asked.

"Of course, she'd have to know," I explained.

"But I couldn't possibly tell another girl," he said, aghast.

"All right," I replied. "It was merely a suggestion thrown out, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith."

He took his leave once more, and was almost out of sight when he stopped, and then walked slowly back again.

"Miss Kitty," he faltered, "I'm afraid I may make you angry——"

"You certainly will if you go on digging up the tennis ground with your stick," I said.

"I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking," he went on. "It seems such a strange request; but would a sister do for the other girl?"

"If you can't find any one better, perhaps she might," I replied.

"You see," he explained, "it would be so convenient. You know all about it, and understand everything, and all that."

"Yes; I should be very convenient," I agreed.

"I should be awfully obliged to you," he explained; "and would you—mind very much?"

"It's not a very pleasant position," I suggested. "However, under the circumstances, perhaps I might do it."

"Of course," he agreed, "it will be very painful for both of us; but you really do think it's a good plan, do you?"

"Oh, do it or don't," I snapped in disgust.

"I think I will try it," he said slowly. "When shall we begin?"

"Really," I protested, "you are the most irritating man I ever had the misfortune to come across. Have you never—let us say—talked pleasantly to a girl before?"

"Oh, of course," he said sadly; "but it came naturally then. That was before I knew Monica so well. You won't mind my calling her Monica, will you?"

"Not in the least," I said. "Have you decided when and how you intend to start?"

"What would you suggest?" he inquired funereally.

"Mr. Ingram," I said indignantly, getting up from my chair, "look at me carefully. You see me. Very well. Now let me tell you that there are several other people who would be only too glad to be in your position; and if you go on vamping much longer I shall say good-bye, and leave you to the misery of your own company."

"It's very difficult," he murmured.

"Rubbish," I said shortly, moving away. "Good-bye. Find some other girl."

"I'm so sorry, Miss Kitty," he pleaded, coming after me. "May I take you out in the punt?"

"You might have ten minutes ago," I said, "but you can't now. The river and a glorious evening—and me—and you tell me it's difficult. Go and write a sonnet."

"Do be merciful, Miss Kitty," he urged, with quite a re-

spectable show of feeling. "I'm not generally such a bear. Please come."

After some demur I went. For some time he persisted in babbling of Monica, and I listened, wishing to find out what crime he had committed to merit regeneration. Apparently it consisted in nothing more heinous than neglected opportunities and a wasted life. "Life is real, life is earnest," had been the text of the sermon, and poor Mr. Ingram's ideas of existence had been knocked to pieces. To a healthy-minded man, who had been a "Blue" not so long before, it came as a shock to be informed by his adored oracle that his life had been wasted, and his intention of living at present as a peaceful country gentleman had been denounced as iniquitous idleness. Even his ambition to cultivate politics was worse than useless in Monica's eyes, for Mr. Ingram was an average Conservative, and she affected a nebulous but perfervid Radicalism. A touching unpractical sympathy with humanity in general, and at a distance, goes well with violet eyes and a soft, tremulous mouth. Apparently, also, their discussions had been complicated by religious questions; but the chief count in the indictment was, as I have said, Mr. Ingram's utter uselessness.

When I had heard enough I cut his babblings short, and we talked of other things. After his sojourn in Monica's rarefied atmosphere, he displayed an appetite for those other things. At times he relapsed into melancholy; but after a victorious exchange of repartee with a man in a steam-launch, he became quite cheerful. It was not until we neared home again that the mooncalf expression reappeared. Then it loomed out large as Monica passed into the house in the distance.

"I feel an awful beast," he said.

"Oh, never mind," I answered. "It's all for the best, and you haven't been very much bored, have you?"

"Of course, I haven't," he said; "but it does seem a little mean, doesn't it?"

"If a thing's worth doing, it's worth doing well," I explained. "Good-bye, Mr. Ingram."

"Good-bye, Miss Kitty," he said. "Would to-morrow be too soon for further operations?"

"Oh, no," I replied. "We must keep it up."

Next morning he appeared again on some excuse or other, and we wandered out on the river. He inquired eagerly

whether the plan was succeeding at all, and I could truthfully assure him it was. Monica had confronted me with a subacid saintliness, as I explained to Mr. Ingram in more graceful terms. Mr. Ingram positively chuckled. A lucid interval of irrational society had done him good, and he already entertained a better opinion of himself. Then he asked me how long I thought the treatment ought to last, and I recommended a week at least. He said I was a jolly good little sort, and we relapsed into other things and spent the morning in a backwater.

During the next few days we repeated the process with slight variations. We went for one or two bicycle rides, and played cricket in the orchard with my young brother Toby. Monica does not bicycle, and refused frigidly to play cricket. I was a little afraid at first that Mr. Ingram would make premature overtures for peace in spite of my strong advice, and the first day he showed symptoms of doing so. Monica's righteous severity repressed them, however, and after that he entered fully into the spirit of the plan. Altogether I was pleased with him. His success in discovering excuses for visiting the house, and his manœuvres for getting away with me were creditable. It was too shameful to reduce him to a moon-calf. He also appeared to enjoy himself. He was much more in his element while explaining to me the mysteries of a late cut and basking in the adulation of Toby than when grappling with the good, the true and the beautiful.

Monica meanwhile grew more and more stony. Her lips assumed an expression of the sternest piety when she spoke to me, and she betook herself again to district visiting, which is usually a sign with her of despair with things in general. I wondered whether she would be foolish enough to remonstrate with me. Of course, if she had been wise she would have held her tongue; but it is difficult for a practiced preacher to remain silent when irritated. Finally she was provoked to speech by a climax. The climax came after she had made some slight attempts at reclaiming Mr. Ingram near the end of the week which we had arranged for the campaign. The attempts were a little too like a command, and the moment was unfortunate, for Mr. Ingram had just defined a punt as the tribute which athleticism pays to philosophy, and was regarding himself with satisfaction. Monica said she failed to see anything funny in the remark, and the attempts failed.

"Kitty," she remarked to me after breakfast next day, "I wish to have a few minutes' serious conversation with you."

"Isn't it a little too hot for that kind of thing?" I suggested.

"I fear," she answered severely, "that you regard serious conversation as out of place at any time, Kitty."

"For once," I said, "I am inclined to agree with you."

"I never attempt now," she went on, "to speak seriously to you unless I feel compelled to——"

"What a life of self-sacrifice!" I murmured.

"Kitty," she replied majestically, "you are merely prolonging a painful interview."

"Well, if you put it in that way——" I observed. "What's the matter now?"

"I have noticed," she remarked slowly, "that Mr. Ingram has been here constantly during the last few days."

"I have noticed the same thing," I agreed, "for the last month or more."

"It is some considerable time," she continued unabashed. "Several times I have suspected that he came here on some unreal pretence."

"I have suspected it myself," I said; "he's an awful liar."

"Mr. Ingram," she replied acidly, "has the makings of a very fine character in him if he is not spoilt. It was with reference to that that I wished to speak to you."

"As far as I can discover from Mr. Ingram," I said, "his chief fault is that he will not leave off-balls alone enough. Is that information any use to you?"

"Kitty," Monica said, with a rising flush, "you will compel me to speak plainly in a minute."

"Hurrah!" I interjected rudely.

"Impertinence will not debar me from my duty," she went on. "You and he have been pursuing a course of conduct which I should characterize in any one but my sister as a flirtation."

"What should you call it in a sister, then?" I inquired.

"I am content to call it thoughtless," she said.

"That must be an effort," I suggested. "I thought you would have called it a disgraceful flirtation."

"I have even—I am sorry to say," she added—"suspected clandestine meetings."

"Clandestine? That's a different question," I answered, which was true, for I had taken care that the concealment

should not extend to Monica. "If you tell a person you're going bicycling somewhere and he suddenly turns up there, is it clandestine?"

"I never would have believed you would have gone so far," she said, with another flush.

"It was only about twenty miles," I urged.

"Of course, this cannot continue," she said; "people are beginning to talk already."

"Oh, Monica, Monica!" I murmured, "gossip is a thing to be avoided."

"I must protect my sister even from herself at all costs," she said firmly.

"As you observe, it's much safer to sit in a summer-house," I replied. The summer-house is Monica's favorite haunt.

"Very well," she concluded, "you leave only one course open to me. I must speak to mother about this. The matter must be placed on a proper footing."

"Monica, if I promise——" I pleaded with apparent contrition.

"Well, Kitty?"

"Not to see him more than four times a week, would that do?"

"I hoped," she remarked sadly, "that you would have seen your conduct in its proper light."

"You mean its improper light, Monica?"

"I shall speak to mother this morning," she repeated.

She had not departed for more than ten minutes when Mr. Ingram arrived, to ask Toby to play in a cricket match. At least he was ready to tell any one else so. However, we agreed that the invitation could wait, and adjourned to the punt.

"The week will be up to-morrow," I observed after a time.

"It's only Thursday to-day," he replied absently. He had been a little preoccupied since we started.

"I mean the week," I said. "I really think it has been a success. I had a conversation with Monica this morning."

"Oh, yes," he answered. "What did she say?"

"The last thing she said," I observed, "was that she was going to tell mother."

"Tell your mother?"

"Yes; about us," I explained. "It's rather fortunate the week's up, isn't it?"

"About us!" he exclaimed. "Why, I used to do very much the same when—how beastly mean!"

"Don't you see the difference?" I inquired.

"No," he said decidedly, "I don't."

"Is your mother sure to drop on it?" he began again after a long pause.

"She generally adopts Monica's suggestions—in matters of this kind," I said; "and really, Mr. Ingram, a week's quite long enough."

"You wouldn't think of going on with it a little longer?" he asked.

"It's quite unnecessary," I said; "the week has served its purpose."

"It hasn't been bad fun, has it?" he answered slowly. "We've had rather a good time, haven't we?"

"On the whole," I agreed, "I think we have."

"I suppose I shan't see much of you after to-day?" he inquired.

"I dare say I shall be about sometimes," I said cheerfully; "but you're really getting the mooncalf expression on you again, and it isn't becoming. Remember, when you've made your peace with Monica, you mustn't take that tone any more, or this week will have been thrown away."

"I haven't the least intention of taking that tone any more," he said, and there was another long pause.

"Miss Kitty," he observed irrelevantly, "was Miss Ellis like you when she was your age? I can't remember."

"Monica was always an angel, Mr. Ingram," I said.

"And you were always yourself," he answered sadly.

"That is scarcely a compliment," I suggested.

"Oh, yes, it is," he said, "from my point of view."

"It's a jolly day," he began again after another interval of silence. "It makes you feel—rather healthy."

"You generally look pretty robust," I said.

"I didn't mean exactly that," he went on. "I meant that it makes you feel it's rather a good thing to be alive in an every-day way."

"You could scarcely be alive once a week," I interjected.

"No, Miss Kitty," he said a little testily, "but don't you sometimes feel as if ordinary things and ordinary people were best?"

"As an ordinary person, I appreciate the compliment, Mr. Ingram," I answered.

"I didn't mean that; you know I didn't," he said; "but there's a lot of humbug about, and on a day like this you see rather straight—it's like reading one of those philosophy books that prove you don't really exist, and then——"

"Having a good dinner afterward," I suggested.

"Well, that does rather express it," he said.

"The philosophy of here-we-are-again," I observed.

"Yes; but we shan't be here again," he said; "that's just it. After all, it's as useless as any other philosophy."

"Aren't you getting a little complicated, Mr. Ingram?" I asked.

"I've been getting complicated," he said sadly, "for the last week. If there ever was an ass, it's I."

"Cheer up, Mr. Ingram," I replied; "Monica will put your mind to rights."

"Bother Monica!" he said sharply.

"What?" I exclaimed, with an expression of astonishment.

"The fact of the matter is, Miss Kitty," he said, "I don't want any more of that. It was all utter rot, and I hope you won't mention it again."

"And so we've wasted the whole week," I replied, "and——"

"We haven't wasted it," he protested; "but it's no good now."

"To put it mildly, aren't you just a little unstable?" I said severely.

"Of course, it might seem like that to most people," he said.

"It might," I agreed. "And poor Monica!"

"I'm not such a puppy as to think she'll mind," he replied. Humility is occasionally a convenient virtue. "Do you think me an utterly shallow fool?" he inquired.

"I would scarcely go so far as that," I said.

"I'm not so shallow as I seem; I'm not, really," he said earnestly. "It's no good, of course; but I'd like to tell you. I don't want you to think me quite worthless."

"Well?" I said.

"It sounds so bald," he murmured, "and yet I can see it quite plainly myself."

"Would you mind driving this swan away, Mr. Ingram?" I interrupted. The bird was under the impression that we were lunching, and had approached me with that suave, blackmailing expression peculiar to Thames swans and bank loafers.

"Certainly, certainly," he said, and, having done so, again relapsed into silence. I could see that he was thinking hard, and he absently lit his lighted pipe four times.

"Miss Kitty," he said at last, "I can't explain it any other way. Would you mind my telling you a story—a kind of parable, you know?"

"I should like it," I said.

"Once," he began, "there was a young goose——"

"That," I interjected, "is not uncommon——"

"Please, don't interrupt," he said. "At least he was a young gander. And he got rather good at swimming and flying and diving, and all that kind of thing."

"Ganders, even in parables, don't dive," I suggested.

"What does it matter?" he went on. "After he'd been swimming and flying for a long time, he got rather tired of it, and one day he swam up a backwater. It was a nice, shady backwater, and he found a swan there. She was a very stately swan, and she looked rather cool and restful. She didn't swim or fly around much, but she knew everything about the bottom of the river, and the clouds, and currents, and all that. The young gander talked to her for a long time, and came back pretty often; and because he'd swum and flown such a lot he thought he was tired of being a gander and wanted to be a swan. He was rather an ass of a gander."

"What a weird animal!" I remarked as he paused.

"Then one day," he pursued; "one day when it was sunshiny outside the backwater, he saw another bird swimming about outside in the sun."

"What kind of bird was it?" I asked.

"It was a pretty, lively little bird," he said.

"Call it a duck," I said gravely.

"It was, I think, a bird of Paradise," he said, with a noble disregard of natural history, "and he couldn't help going out and swimming about in the sun, too. In a day or two he found out that swimming and flying were what he could do best, and that it was what a gander is intended to do. And he didn't care a snap about clouds and currents, and he didn't want to be a swan any more. And he found the other little bird was the jolliest and prettiest little bird he'd ever met, and he was happier than he'd ever been before. But one day the other little bird told him that she was going away, and wouldn't fly about in the sun any more. And then he knew—well, hang it!

he knew that he'd give the whole river if he could always swim about with the little bird. He couldn't help telling her so."

"Well, how did it end?" I asked.

"Of course," he said sadly, "she didn't want to swim about with him. I don't suppose she would in any case, and then she knew about the backwater and what an ass the gander had been, and didn't believe he could really care about anybody. Oh, Kitty, Kitty, don't you understand now?"

"There's a small mistake in the story," I said.

"What is it?" he said despairingly.

"Only," I said, "that the other little bird was a little goose."

"A little goose?" he exclaimed.

"And the story needn't end in that way," I added, "unless you wish it."

"Then, Kitty——?" he cried in astonishment.

I think I nodded. The rest of the conversation was commonplace.

Monica congratulated me with a chastened sorrow which her fears for poor George's future aroused. She has also hinted several times that I intended the culmination from the first. Did I? I wonder.



THE PALOMINO STALLION*

BY CHARLES RIDGEWAY VAN BLARCOM.



WE drank our coffee, saddled up and rode away from the ranch house into the chill death of night that comes before the dawn, Tom and Jack and I.

For the first hour the three of us had but little to say, as our cow-ponies scuffled quickly ahead through the dark, beyond a word at the passing of a light and some disjointed talk of the chances for finding the "Wolf's Pond Bunch," a wild outlying drove of brood-mares and younger horses. There is always the risk, with such a drove, of their joining the mustangs, and we had decided to take out their leader, the shy Palomino stallion, and break him to ride, putting in his place a gentler horse; one who would keep his family nearer home.

Clearing the thicker growth of the main valley we rode up an open draw that heads away toward the high levels of the bare divide. It was a night of stars; an oscuro deeper than the black void beneath a clouded sky. The creak and chafing of the saddle gear, and the quick crunching of the horses' feet went strangely through the silence.

Beside me rode so much of Jack as was not lost in revery, swinging easily along, with a certain care in the nursing of his cigarette and an absent tapping of his quirt against the horse's quarter. I could catch at times the soft gleam of the starlight in his eye and my thoughts strayed vaguely on the trail of his, wandering with the sweethearts and the worldful of brothers the dear fellow lived for. On my other hand rode Tom—a riddle not to be read by such key as the occasional emphatic slap of his quirt against his leathern chappareros.

*Written for Short Stories.

A sturdy figure, a careful seat in the saddle and a something in the strong face that little children loved.

And as we rode steadily through the star-gloom, suddenly, from out a thicket, far off on the low swell of hill that outlines the gentle valley, there came, clear as a bugler's reveille, the morning song of a mocking bird. Of all the sounds that haunt the night, and cheer the dawn there is none that moves one as does the surprising readiness of the mocking bird's first call.

As the song ended, with the sharp finish of a challenge, Tom raised his sombrero and cried out to the bird the morning salutation of the Mexicans—a benediction, as it comes from the lips of the humblest peon, even as our "God-b'ye" was meant to be; and Jack broke out with the plaintive, barbaric air and the queer, inconsequential phrasing of "Mañana."

And then, as our ponies climbed from the head of the valley to the higher level, the great sigh and rustle of the waking earth filled the air.

And so, while yet the prairie forms beside showed dimly, the night had lightened, till the long range of sight seemed the limit of eye power, and the chant of the matins of the wilderness rose all about us. The full choir of the song birds, the plaintive solo of the quail, the drum-like challenge of a distant gobbler, the mellow boom of calling cattle.

Presently there fell, in that strange light, a sudden hush; and we drew rein, rolling our cigarettes with heads bowed in absent reverence, and ere we had them glowing, the great world was all alight! The chorus of the dawn broke out again, a wave of crimson swelled across the east, and with that sudden change from night to day which is ever strange to him of Northern breeding, the great, red sun swung slowly into the cloudless blue of the dry-country sky.

A couple of hours later we found the Palomino stallion and his harem, as they trailed out from watering at Wolf's Pond.

Queer cattle, these half-tamed range horses.

At first the mares and youngsters huddled wildly together as we rode to within a hundred yards of them. The stallion trotted bravely out to meet us, the sunlight glinting in the bright cream of his coat and in the rare, silvery dappling for which the Mexicans had named him. Soon they were all following us with a shy curiosity, but, when we turned and commenced to drive them, the whole crew stampeded, and a pretty chase they led us for the first five miles.

The stallion, weaving back and forth in the rear to touch up stragglers, kept the mad pace with scarce a break in the long, free swing of his trot.

By the time we neared the ranch we had them well in hand, however, and heading them in between the wide spread wings of the horse corral, went tearing down that narrowing lane with long whips cracking, and each man in full cry and crowding them in through the open gap with a rush, we swung the high gate behind them.

After dinner Jack lassoed the stallion, casting with the underhand throw as the string of horses whirled swiftly about the circular fence. The loop fell open before the horse, and both his forefeet struck the ground inside it. Jack drew the loop snug, with a swing and a light pull, and, as the Monarch of Wolf's Pond range rose to the next leap, threw his weight upon the lasso and jerked both forelegs from under him, bringing him down broadside. Before the poor beggar could catch his breath Tom and I were upon him. I gripped him by the ear and by the under jaw, with thumb stuck through behind the nippers, and forced his head back upon his shoulder while Tom quickly slipped his lasso over the hind feet and stretched it taut to the snubbing post. So he lay at our mercy while we carefully adjusted the close-fitting "jaquima" halter and bent a forty-foot lead rope into the loop of it. To bit a bronco is a useless cruelty. Loosing the ropes from off his feet we played him for an hour, as one plays a fighting-salmon, and then staked him out on an open bit of sod to run the length of his rope, as, indeed, is the way of many folk, and to throw himself with all the certainty of fate.

Next morning, after an hour's careful work, we had the Palomino saddled, ready for me to mount.

The beautiful brute stood blindfolded, his black mane and tail and waving foretop streaming in the breeze and every muscle tense and quivering with the raging fear that filled him. We had lashed a short stick, snugly rolled in a blanket, across the saddle, back of the pommel, to brace my thighs; shortened the stirrup leathers and tied a thong from one stirrup to the other to prevent their swinging. Jack, on the off side, held the stallion, dumbly crowded against his own horse. Tom sat his mount behind me. Coiling the lead rope in my left hand, I grasped, along with it, the reins of the "jaquima." With the

right hand upon the pommel I swayed the saddle back and forth for a moment and then, with two fingers of the left hand in the check-piece of the halter, I put my toe in the stirrup and gently swung into the saddle. Settling myself carefully I nodded to Jack to slip the blindfold. As he did so, Tom and he moved their horses forward.

The broncho stumbled awkwardly along with them, in the sudden daze of the sunlight, while I was filled with a most unheroic hope that he would run! But in a moment he caught sight of all the indignity that had been put upon him, and at that the war was on.

The wild swing of the straight, high leap, the racking wrench of the buck, the dizzying jar of the stiff-legged drop, and the breathless speed of it!

For five minutes of chaos that bronco bucked, straight up and down, upon a space one might have covered with a wagon sheet, and I knew that such rough riding as I had done before had been but child's play!

Then as I fell into the swing of it and felt the grip of my high-heeled boot in the shortened stirrup, the twist of my spur in the flank-girth, the brace of the roll across my thighs and the spring of knee and grip of leg that held me there, I knew that I could win. I forgot the wrenching, jarring strain of it, and there came to me the nicety of balance and the quick interplay of muscle of the trained wrestler, but for how long? Already my head was swimming and my eyes blinded from the shock of the quick concussions. And then the bronco played the dreaded "snake-fence," twisting alternately to the one side and the other until it seemed as if the force of each sidewise drop must drive his shoulder to the ground. An agony of pain went through every joint and sinew, as I dizzily followed the quick changing of balance. For an instant my heart failed me, and there was a strange choking in my nostrils, but as I blew them clear I caught the scent and the hot splash upon my cheek of my own blood, and with that the decent fellow, who has usually lived inside my jacket, went out from me, and in his place there burned in every vein, and swelled in every muscle a maddened brute, as savage, as reckless and ten thousand times as determined as the one between my thighs.

Jack, afire at the sight of the red trickle upon my white face, cried out, as with the war-shout of a charging captain:

"Quirt him! Damn him, quirt him!"

Tom, judging a weakening of the bronco's nerves, and seeing that the case was desperate, sent to my dull ears in that strong voice of his:

"Now, Tonie, give him his head!"

Slacking the lines, I lashed the brute on head and flank and shoulder with savage blows of the stinging lash of my heavy quirt, while Jack's great cow-whip hissed and roared as it cut burning gashes in the bronco's haunch. Tom, lurching savagely against me, staggered the stallion till he all but fell, and then, the rhythm of his bucking broken, and cowed by the punishment we gave him, he broke into mad galloping, while Tom and Jack, on either side, hustled him clear of every danger.

We ran that bronco till he staggered and was like to fall, and then Tom caught him by the "jaquima." I kicked my spurs out from the tangle of the flank-girth, and Jack, with his great arm about me, lifted me clear of the saddle—the Palomino stallion was tamed.



THE REVENGE OF "FRECKLES"*

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS



HE was the most peculiar chap that ever came to Dunston's, not excepting even Mason, who shot the doctor's wife's parrot with a catapult and, after he had been flogged, offered to stuff it in the face of the whole school and nearly got expelled. Freckles was so called owing to his skin, which was simply a complicated pattern much like what you can see in any map of the Grecian Archipelago. This arose, he thought, from his having been born in Australia. Anyway it was rum to see, and so were his hands, which had reddish down on the backs. His eyes were also reddish—a sort of mixture of red and gray specks, and they glimmered like a cat's when he was angry, which was often. His real name was Maine, and he had no side. His father had made a big fortune selling wool at Sydney and his grandfather was one of the last people to be transported to Botany Bay—through no fault of his own. After he had been on a convict ship two years, a chap at home confessed on his death-bed that he had done the thing Maine's grandfather was transported for; so they naturally let Maine's grandfather go free; and he was so sick about it that he never came back home again, but married a farmer's daughter near Sydney and settled out there for good.

Maine didn't think much of England, and was always talking about the Australian forests of blue gum trees and bush, and sneering rather at the size of our forests round Merivale, though they were good ones. He never joined in games, but roamed away alone for miles and miles into the country on half-holidays, and trespassed with a cheek I never saw equaled. He could run like a hare—especially about half-a-mile or so;

*From "The Idler."

which, as he explained to me, is just about a distance to blow a keeper. Certainly, though often chased, he was never caught and never recognized owing to things he did which he had learned in Australia and copied from famous bushrangers. His great hope some day was to be a bushranger himself, and he practiced in a quiet way every Saturday afternoon, making it a rule to go out of bounds always. His get-up was fine. Me, being fond of the country and not keen on games, he rather took to, and after I had sworn on crossed knives not to say a word to a soul (which I never did till Freckles left) he told me his secrets and showed me his things. If you'd seen Freckles starting for an excursion you wouldn't have said there was anything remarkable about him, but really he was armed to the teeth and had everything a bushranger would be likely to want in a quiet place like Merivale. Down his leg was the barrel of an airgun, strong enough to kill any small thing like a cat at twenty-five yards, the rest of the gun was arranged inside the lining of his coat, and the slugs you fired he carried loose in his trousers-pockets. Round his waist he had a leather belt he got from a sailor for a pound. Inside the leather was human skin, said to be flayed off a chap by cannibals somewhere; which was a splendid thing to have for your own, if it was true, and in the belt a place had been specially made for a knife. Freckles, of course, had a knife in it—a "bowie" knife that made you cold to see. He never used it, but kept it ready, and said if a keeper ever caught him he possibly might have to. In addition to these things he carried in his coat-pockets a little spirit-lamp and a collapsible tin pot and a bag of tea.

He said tea was the very life of men in the bush, and that often after a hard escape, when he was out of danger, he would get away behind a woodstack, or under the banks of a stream, or some such secret place, and brew a cup and drink it, and feel the better for it.

Lastly, Freckles had a flat lead mask with holes for the eyes and mouth, which he always fitted on when trespassing. He said it was copied from the helmet Ned Kelly, the King of the Bushrangers, used to wear; but it was not bullet-proof, but only used for a disguise. We were in the same dormitory, and, one night, when all the chaps had gone to sleep, he dressed up in the things and stood where some moonlight came in, and certainly looked jolly.

Once, as an awful favor—me being much smaller and not fast enough to run away from a man—he let me come and see what he did when bushranging on a half-holiday in winter. "I shan't run my usual frightful risks with you," he said, "because I might have to open fire to save you, and that would be very disagreeable to me; but we'll trespass a bit, and I'll shoot a few things if I can. I don't shoot much—only for food."

He made me a mask with tinfoil off chocolate, smoothed out and gummed on cardboard, but I had no arms and he said I had better not try and get any.

We started for the usual walk. Chaps were allowed to go through a public pinewood to Merivale; but half through, by a place where was a board which warned us to keep the path, Freckles branched off into some dead bracken and squatted down and put on his mask. I also put on mine. Then he fastened his airgun together and loaded it, and told me to walk six paces behind him and do as he did. His eyes were awfully keen, and now and then he pointed to a feather on the ground or an old nest or a patch of rum fungus or a crabapple still hanging on the tree, though all the leaves were off.

Once he fired at a jay and missed it, then fell down in the fern as if he was shot himself and remained quite motionless for some time. He told me that he always did so after firing, that he might hear if anybody had been attracted by the sound. It was a well-known bushman's dodge. Once we saw a keeper through a clearing, and Freckles lay flat on his stomach, and so did I. He knew the keeper well, and told me he had many times escaped from him. We waited half an hour and turned to go back a different way from that of the keeper. Then, where a glade sloped down to some water and the grass was all dewy and covered with mole-hills, Freckles went to inspect a trap he had set a week before. He was collecting skins for a mole-skin waistcoat; but he said skinning moles was one of the beastliest tasks a hunter ever had. However, there was a mole caught, and he skinned it and wrapped up the skin in leaves and put it in his hat.

Then we had some real sport, for on the other side of the glade we saw rabbits lopping about, and Freckles stalked them through the fern while I waited motionless; and finally he shot a young one. I wanted to take it back and get cook to do it for us, but he said I was a fool.

"If you want any you must have it now. It's about the time

I take a meal," he said, "and that's a part of my ranging and hunting you haven't seen yet."

He knew the country well, and said we were in one of the most carefully preserved places anywhere about; which must have been true for there were an awful lot of pheasants calling in the glades. But Freckles got down into a drain and showed me a hollow he had scooped out under a lot of ivy where it fell over a bank.

"This is one of my caves," he said, "and here we can feed and drink in safety, but you mustn't talk or I shan't be able to hear if anything is stirring in the woods."

He took off his mask, set down his gun, and lighted his spirit-stove.

"Skin the rabbit and cut off his hind legs while I make tea," he said.

So I did, and he held them over the lamp till they were fairly cooked outside, but not right through. He ate and drank with his ears straining for every sound. Then he took the rest of the rabbit and removed all traces of eating, and buried everything we had left.

"If I didn't," he explained, "some keeper's dog would find my lair, and make a row and give it away; and the keepers would doubtless lie in wait for me and catch me red-handed. You can't be too careful, because every man's hand's against you; which, of course, is the beauty of it."

We got back without anything happening, and I've hated the sight of rabbit pretty well ever since; but Freckles said the juices of animals are better for the human frame underdone.

Well, that gives you an idea of Freckles, and the affair with Frenchy, which I am going to tell you of, showed that he really was cut out for bushranging. Frenchy, as we called him, was Monsieur Michel. He didn't belong entirely to Dunston's, but lived in Merivale and came to us three days a week, and went to a girls' school the other three. He was a rum, oldish chap, whose great peculiarities were to make puns in English and to appeal to our honor about everything.

He would slang a fellow horribly one day, and wave his arms and pretty nearly jump out of his skin; and the next day he would bring up a whacking pear for the fellow he'd slanged, or a new knife or something. He pretty nearly cried sometimes, and he told us his nerves were frightfully tricky, and often led him to be harsh when he didn't mean it. He couldn't

keep order or make chaps work if they didn't choose, and Steggles, who had an awfully cunning dodge of always rubbing him up the wrong way, and then looking crushed and broken-hearted so as to get things, which he did, said that Frenchy was like damp fireworks; because you never knew exactly when he'd go off or how.

One day, dashing out of class with a frightful yell, Freckles got sent for, and went back and found Monsieur raving mad. It seemed that Freckles had yelled too soon—before he was out of the class-room, in fact; and Frenchy had got palpitation from it. He let into Freckles properly then. He said he was his "bête noire" and "un sot à vingt-quatre carats"—which means an eighteen-carat ass in English, but twenty-four carats in French—and "one of the aborigines who ought to be kept on a chain," and many other such-like things. Freckles turned all colors, and then white, with a sort of bluish tint to his lips. He didn't say a word, but looked at Frenchy with such a frightful expression that I felt something would happen later. All that happened at the time was that Freckles got the eighth book of Telemachus to write out into French from English, and then correct by Fenelon, which was a pretty big job if a chap had been fool enough to try and do it; and Monsieur Michel went off to Merivale with a big card fluttering on his coat-tail with "Ici on parle Français" written on it in red pencil. This I had managed to do myself while Frenchy was jawing Freckles. I told Freckles, but it didn't comfort him much. He said there were some things no mortal man would stand; and to be called "an aborigine" because a man was born in Australia, seemed to him about the bitterest insult even an old frog-eating Frenchman could have invented. Happening to him, of all chaps, it was especially a thing which would have to be revenged, seeing what his views were. He said:

"I couldn't bushrange or anything with a clear conscience in the future if I had a thing like this hanging over me. It's the frightfullest slur on my character, and I won't sit down under it for fifty Frenchmen."

Then he said he should take a week to settle what to do, and went into the playground alone.

Next time Frenchy came up he was just the same as ever—awfully easygoing and jolly, and let Freckles off the Telemachus, and offered him as classy a knife, with a corkscrew, and other things, including tweezers, as ever you saw—just

the knife for Freckles, considering his ways. But it didn't come off. Freckles got white again when he saw the knife, and said:

"Thank you, Monsieur; I don't want your knife, and the imposition is half done, and will be finished next time you come."

Then Frenchy called him a silly boy, and tried to make a joke and playfully pinch Freckles by the ear. But nobody saw the joke, and Freckles dodged away. Then Frenchy sighed, and looked round to see who should have the knife, and didn't seem to see anybody in particular, and left it on his desk. He often sighed in class, and sometimes told us he was without friends, unless he might call us friends; and we said he might.

When he went, Freckles told me he considered the knife was another insult. Then he explained what he was going to do. He said:

"I shall finish the impo. first, so as not to be obliged to him for anything, and then I shall stick him up."

"Stick him up, how?" I said.

"It's a bushranging expression," he explained. "To 'stick up' a man is to make him stand and deliver what he's got. I see my way to do this with Frenchy. He always goes and comes from Merivale through the woods, as you know, and now he's up here on Friday nights coaching Slade and Betterton for their army exam. Afterwards he has supper with Mr. Thompson or the doctor. There you are. I wait my time in the wood, which is jolly lonely by night, though it is such a potty little place hardly worth calling a wood; then he comes along, and I stick him up."

"It's highway robbery," I said. "You might get years and years of imprisonment."

"I might," he said, "but I shan't. You must begin your career some time, and I'm going to next Friday night. I've often got out of the dormitory and been in that wood by night, and only the chaps in the dormitory have known it."

Well, the night came, and all that we heard about it till afterward was that about eleven o'clock, or possibly even late than that, there was a fearful pealing at the front door of Dunston's, and looking out we could see a stretcher and something on it. That something was actually Freckles, though

the few chaps who knew what was going to be done felt sure it must be Frenchy. Because Freckles is five feet ten and growing, and Frenchy isn't more than five feet six at the outside, and a poor thing at that. But it was Freckles all right, and two laboring men had brought him back; and Frenchy had come with them.

Not for five weeks afterwards, when Freckles could get up and limp about, did I hear the truth; and I'll tell it in his own words, because they must be better than a chap's who wasn't there. He seemed frightfully down in the mouth, and said that he could never look fellows in the eyes again; but it cheered him telling me; and when I told him he was thundering well out of it he admitted he was.

He said:

"I got off all right, and the moon was as clear as day, and everything just ripe for sticking a chap up. Then, like a fool, having a longish time to wait, I didn't just stop in shadow behind a tree-trunk or something in the usual way, but thought I'd do a thing I'd never heard of bushrangers doing, though Indian thugs are pretty good at it. I went and got up a tree which has a branch over the road; and I thought I'd drop down almost on top of Frenchy to start with. And that's just what I did do, only I dropped wrong and came down pretty nearly on my head, owing to slipping somehow at the start. What did exactly happen to me as I left the tree I shall never know. Anyway, Frenchy came along sure enough, and I dropped, and he jumped I should think fully a yard into the air; but that was all, because in falling I hit a big root (it was a beech tree) and went and broke something in my ankle and something in my chest, and couldn't stand. Consequently, of course, I couldn't stick him up. The pain was pretty thick, but feeling what a fool I was seemed to make me forget it. Anyway, finding it was useless thinking of sticking him up, I tried to hobble into the fern and get out of sight; and finding I couldn't crawl, I rolled. But, of course, you can't roll away from a chap, and he came after me, and my mask fell off while I rolled, and he recognized me.

"“Mon Dieu!” it is the boy Maine!” he said. ‘Speak, child, what in the wide world was this?’

"I disguised my voice and said I wasn't Maine, and that he'd better leave me alone, or it might be the worse for him yet. But he wouldn't go, and chancing to get queer about the head

He got an extraordinary deal of comfort out of it, and said he should return to his old ways again as soon as he could run a mile without stopping. And we found his lead mask, like Ned Kelly's, just where it had dropped when he rolled over in the fern, and he welcomed it like a friend or a dog.

That's the end, except that his father did write to Dunston about Frenchy, and Dunston, not being very keen about Frenchy himself, seemed to think he would be just the chap for the girls of Freckles' father. Anyway, he went, and he cried when he said "Good-bye" to the school; and Freckles told me that when he said "Good-bye" to him he yelled with crying and blessed him in French, and said that the sunny atmosphere of Australia would very likely prolong his life till he had saved enough to get his bones back to France.

So he went; and Freckles went after him much sooner than he ever expected to; because the keepers finally caught him in the game preserves, sitting in his hole under the stream bank, frizzling the leg of a pheasant which he had shot out of a tree with his airgun. And Dunston wrote to his father, and his father wrote back that Freckles, being now fourteen and apparently having less sense than when he left Australia, had better return and begin life as an office-boy in his place of business. Freckles told me that office-boys in his father's office generally got a fortnight's holiday, but that his mother would probably work up his governor to give him three weeks. Then he would get a proper outfit and track away to the boundless scrub, and fall in with other chaps who had similar ideas, and begin to bushrange seriously. But he never wrote to me, and I don't know if he really succeeded well. I'm sure I hope he did, for he was a tidy chap, though queer.



A CLAIRVOYANT CANNIBAL*

BY J. F. ROSE-SOLEY



“SOME people I know,” remarked the old trader, “run away with the idea that the Polynesians are a dull, unimaginative race, with no idea but to eat and sleep, and to bask on the coral beaches we hear so much about. And then there are others—mostly they write stories—who go to the opposite extreme. They spin wonderful yarns about romantic love episodes, men and women dying for each other, killing their rivals, and all that sort of thing. As if the islanders had the ghost of an idea of love-making, in our sense.”

“Yes; but it would be no use writing a story if the love-making was not romantic. No one would read it. The public wants sensation, not mere common sense, now-a-days.”

“Well, I suppose that’s so,” he assented gruffly, “but, at any rate, if the South Sea Islanders are not very tender in their love-making, there is no doubt about the strength of their superstitions. They are just chockful of fanciful ideas, about ghosts and devils, and all that sort of thing. If they are once convinced, for instance, that they have seen a ghost, they will just cling to the belief until it kills them. I’ve known many a man die of sheer fright, from the workings of his imagination, merely because he believed he had seen a ghost. If they make up their minds they are going to die, why, they die, and it is not a bit of use trying to stop them. All the doctor’s stuff in the world is of no use in a case of this kind.”

I saw that the old man was fairly started, so I let him go ahead in his own way. Having lit his “sului,” or native cigarette, and taken a long drink of “kava,” he went on.

*Written for Short Stories.

"It was years ago, I forget how many, but the Fijis had only just been annexed, and the labor trade was flourishing. I was second mate of a little Levuka schooner, and we went blackbirding, as they called it then, amongst the New Hebrides. The skipper was all right, a decent-spoken, kindly sort of a man, but strict, as the master of a labor vessel ought to be. The first mate was a jovial young card; had had a good education, too, and came of a high English family, it was rumored. But he never talked of his past, only sometimes, when in a sentimental mood, he would drop a hint which showed that he thought he had come down in the world. He was a good sailor, for all that, always first if there was any dangerous work to be done, brave enough, but terrible obstinate.

"It was the first time he had been to the New Hebrides, and he made light of any danger from the natives. They would never touch him, he swore, never touch any man who had the pluck to stand up to them and show that he was a white man and not afraid of any blackfellows. He didn't know the people of Santos, you see, and he had not time to gain experience of them—they didn't give him the chance.

"Our crew were Fiji boys, good enough for the trade, but there was one of them called Joey, quite different from his fellows, and he caused all the trouble. Joey, instead of laughing and joking like his mates, would sit silent and thoughtful, or maybe muttering to himself as if he were praying. He had a fetish, too, a string of human teeth, which he wore around his neck. It was his god, and he would count the teeth over and over again, just as the Roman Catholics do with their rosaries. For Joey was very superstitious, he came of a cannibal tribe, and if he had not eaten human flesh himself, at any rate his parents had. So that the rest of the crew were a bit afraid of him, and Joey was left pretty much alone.

"Well, it was a fine, clear evening, about two bells, when Joey first distinguished himself. It was my watch on deck, and I remember I was sitting on the weather rail, watching a bit of a cloud which had risen, and wondering whether it would turn into a squall, and perhaps give us a wetting. All of a sudden I heard a flop on the deck behind me, and the schooner shot up into the wind, for she carried a weather helm.

"I turned round pretty quick, you may be sure, cursing Joey for his laziness. But I soon stopped swearing, and grabbed the wheel myself, for there was Joey, stretched at full length

on the deck, his eyeballs starting out of his head, his face screwed up into an expression of agony and terror, such as I never saw—except once. It took me five minutes I could get the little craft to pay off again, and by this ne skipper had come on deck to see what all the row was ..

"We could not get anything out of Joey, except see him, me see him debble," so we dragged him below d left him still muttering and clenching his strange neckl Next day he was a little more sensible, and we cross-exa ed him closely. 'Me see him debble,' he repeated, 'one fellow big black man, plenty fire, him come down mainmast, run along deck, go mate's boat.'

"Now the mate's boat was on the starboard side, opposite where I had been sitting, so that, of course, my assertion that I had seen nothing was not worth much.

"'Him fellow die one week,' Joey added, pointing to the mate, who changed color as he listened, though he made an effort to laugh the whole thing away as a piece of silly superstition on the kanaka's part. The strangest feature about the affair was that when we looked around there actually was a black streak, running down the starboard side of the mainmast, and showing out freshly against the surface of the newly varnished spar.

"The streak ran across the white planks of the deck, up the bulwarks and then made a jump into the whaleboat, which was hanging on the davits. And there, in the stern thwarts, just where the mate always sat when he was steering, was a great, irregular round black patch. It looked as if the place had been burnt by some kind of fire, for the paint all about was sizzled up. As to the deck, though we holystoned it for weeks afterward, we could never get that streak out of it, until at last the skipper, who used to swear every time he saw it, told us angrily to leave the blamed thing alone, and he would have it planed out when we got back to Fiji.

"A few days after Joey's visitation we reached Santos, and made a good start with the recruiting, securing thirty boys at once from a chief. It looked as if our voyage was going to be a prosperous one, and for the moment we forgot all about the kanaka's prophecy.

"The limit of time, one week, placed upon the mate's life was nearly up. He had had his supernatural vision on Monday, and here it was Saturday; we were lying at anchor in the

bay, all our work finished and ready to sail as soon as our sea stock of fresh provisions came from the shore.

"Eastby, that was the mate's name, would jest carelessly about the matter with Joey, but the Fijian, who had never been the same man since his fit, would merely shake his frizzy head, and when warned that his reputation as a prophet was at stake would answer :

" 'Me see him debble,' with an air of conviction, as if the assertion settled the whole business.

"The chiefs had promised to send our provisions off on the Monday, so that Sunday was an off day for us, and we just lay round and loafed and watched the little gold and blue fish swimming round at the bottom of the lagoon, amidst the gorgeously colored coral. Two or three miles away, across the glare of the heated lagoon, the shore looked cool and tempting, with its great groves of palms towering up to the sky, and underneath the dark green of the breadfruit trees, with here and there a little brown hut peeping through the foliage.

"Time hung heavy on our hands, and we wanted badly to go ashore. The natives had been most friendly in their dealings with us, but, of course, we had only met them on the beach, a covering boat lying off, ready to open fire at the slightest sign of treachery.

"The natives understood the meaning of these precautions just as well as we did, and hence had always been on their bset behavior. But our skipper, who was an old trader, knew that danger, in dealing with these people, is always most to be feared when there is least sign of it. So he had given strict orders that no one was to leave the vessel, and we grumbled very much at what we considered absurd precautions.

"After dinner, having had a glass or two of grog, the skipper turned in for an afternoon's nap, whilst the mate and I sat and smoked our pipes on the after hatch. We kept looking at the beautiful green shore groves, and the dazzling white sandy beach, longing to go there, just, I suppose, because it was forbidden.

"At last Eastby knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and jumped up with an oath :

" 'I can't stand it any more, Tom,' he cried, 'skipper or no skipper, I'm going ashore.'

" 'You'd better not,' I replied, 'the old man will be awful wild.'

"'He need not know. I shan't stay long, and I'll be back before he wakes up from his sleep. Keep a lookout whilst I am away, there's a good fellow.'

"So, in spite of my dissuasion, the mate, with three of the boys, pulled away across the lagoon. I watched the boat with the glasses until she reached the shore, and was hidden by a projecting point. Then, having nothing else to do, I had a bit of a nap myself, and when I woke up the sun was getting low. Still there was no sign of the mate's boat, and I began to feel anxious for him, for the captain, I knew, might come on deck any moment. Then there would be trouble for the mate. The sun was setting, and I was closely watching the shore with my binoculars, when I heard a stern voice behind me.

"'Where's that starboard boat? Who's had the infernal impudence to leave the ship against my orders?'

"I saw it was no use lying, so I up and told the square truth. The skipper danced about and swore like a mad man, but oaths would not bring the mate back.

"'What time did he leave?' he asked.

"'About two o'clock, sir.'

"'Time he was back, then. The fool, if anything happens to him it'll spoil our whole trip. Tom, you must take the other boat and go and see what is the matter. Don't go far from the beach, and if the mate does not return by dark, bring his boat back, it's no use leaving her there to be stolen by the natives. Mr. Eastby will have to spend the night ashore, that is all, and I will talk to him in the morning. Take your revolver and a couple of Sniders with you.'

"We were just lowering the boat, when the Fiji boy, who was to have formed one of the crew, started his pranks again. He fell backwards on the deck in an hysterical fit, crying out:

"'Me see him, Missee Mate, plenty fellow blackfellow tie him up, carry him away all same pig, plenty good "ki-ki" by'm bye.' And he smacked his lips in horrible anticipation.

"The indignant skipper kicked him as he lay in the scuppers.

"'Never mind that madman,' he ordered, 'get another boy and be off at once.'

"I was nothing loth to go, you may be sure, if only to get out of the skipper's road, for he was not a man to trifle with. On rounding the point which shut off the view from the ship I saw the mate's boat about a hundred yards from the shore, the three boys sitting idle in her.

"'Where's the mate?' I cried.

"The boys, who were shivering with fear, pointed to the shore:

"'Him fellow mate go longa bush, no come back.'

"This was all I could get out of them at first, but after a while, after much cross-questioning, learned, in their funny pigeon English, that the mate, taking two of the boys, had gone up a track which led into the bush. There were no natives about, but the path looked well trodden, as if used by a number of villagers. They had not gone far, when the kanakas, after the manner of their race, got scared, and went back to the boat for their rifles, which they had foolishly forgotten. The mate said he would wait for them, and they left him sitting on the root of a big pandanus tree. When they returned, he was gone, not a sign of him was to be found anywhere, so, after waiting a while, they fled back to the beach, and hauled the boat off. There they had been sitting and shivering ever since.

"That was their story; but I don't believe either of them went back to the mate after leaving him. They were panic-stricken, but whether they spoke the truth or no, that was the last ever seen of Eastby."

"What became of him, then?" I struck in.

"Who knows? Only the cannibals in the interior of the island could tell you.

"As it was now quite dark there was nothing for me to do but to go back and report the matter to the captain.

"The mad Fijian was still raving. I could hear him long before the boat got alongside the schooner. All attempts to force him below had failed, and he was lying on the deck forward, alternately shrieking and raving. The skipper sat on the after hatch, and at first sight I thought he was drunk. He seemed dazed, and made no answer when I told him how badly we had fared. But I soon saw it was not drink, but sheer horror that had overpowered him.

"I had not been on board five minutes before I understood, and like the skipper, was unable to take my eyes off that dark crouching figure forward.

"Joey, gnawing at a belaying pin as if it were a bone, was going through all the awful pantomime of a cannibal feast, jabbering the while in his native dialect. We could only understand him when, from sheer force of habit, he lapsed into

pigeon English. We would catch a sentence, always the same: "Missee mate, plenty fellow good "ki-ki."

"Then with his sheath knife he would carve imaginary slices from a human joint, and fall again to gnawing at his belaying pin.

"The crew were huddled up in a panic-stricken body aft, as far away from the madman as they could get. None of them dared touch him, and neither the skipper nor I had a fancy for the job. Unless we adopted the extreme measure of shooting him down, there was nothing to be done. So we left him alone until toward daylight, his delirium wore itself out, and he sank exhausted on the deck.

"Next morning, with a well-armed party, I went ashore, but could find no trace of the mate. Evidently the savages had fled from our vengeance, for all the villages were abandoned, and we dared not, with the few men we could spare from the schooner, pursue the people into the bush. For a week we remained in the lagoon, going ashore every day. None was to be seen, and no news of the missing man to be heard, so that it was evident, as long as the schooner stayed there, the natives would never come back. We had to abandon the search, but when we got back to Fiji we heard that another vessel had called at the island a month later and purchased the mate's watch and revolver from a native, who could not or would not tell where he had got them."

"And the Fijian prophet of evil, what of him?"

"Well," concluded the old man, "that was another strange thing. When we began the voyage he was as fine a strapping young kanaka as you could wish to see, standing six feet high, and broad in proportion. One couldn't tell what was the matter with him, but after the delirious attack, he just wasted away to a skeleton, and his hair turned whiter and whiter every day.

"When we landed him at Levuka he looked an old man of eighty, with a snow-white mop, and legs which would hardly carry his tottering form up the beach.

"I called to him as he left, 'Good-bye, Joey, get well soon!' and he turned to me with a sad, appealing look on his face:

"'Good-bye; me go die. Too much "ki-ki" Missee Mate; no can live!'

"And, sure enough, he died at low water, three days later."



A YOUNG GIRL'S DIARY*

BY MARCEL PRÉVOST

MY SUITORS.

November —, 18—.



Just as I was going up to my room, Monday night, mamma kissed me, and said in the severe tone which she reserves for communications touching my marriage: "Juliette, two gentlemen will dine with us Thursday. Consider it settled. You know what you must do." I considered it settled, certainly; but mamma was mistaken in one thing—I was in absolute ignorance as to what I must do. What is there for a young girl to do from Monday till Thursday, when she is to be inspected by two suitors for her hand? I cannot change in face or form, and I really haven't the time to learn a new language, one of those tongues

* Translated by Mrs. Clay C. Macdonald, from the French, for Short Stories. Illustrations by Florence England Nosworthy.

which possess, so mamma says, such a powerful attraction for marriageable men! Nor have I even the time to order a new gown. I have decided therefore to remain just as I am, and to present to those gentlemen Thursday evening the Juliette of Monday, with her pink and white complexion, her five feet four of stature, and the two poor little living languages which she murders atrociously.

Who are these gentlemen? I have a faint suspicion. Mamma will not tell me their names, for she fears my preliminary criticisms. Usually I sit upon her candidates so thor-



oughly beforehand that she dares not exhibit them. "They are charming men," she declares; "charming, that expresses it. Much too good for a madcap like you. One of them is no longer young; but the other is not yet thirty." That mamma of mine has such an adorable way of putting things! She regards my suitors collectively, offsetting the faults of the one with the good qualities of the other. Would she like to have me marry all of them at once, I wonder?

Papa gave me more information. I do anything I choose with papa by a walk to the Champs Elysées in the morning, or

a stroll on the boulevards about five o'clock. I walk along with my hands clasped around his right arm, clinging to him, my large gray eyes raised to his white beard as if in adoration. People nudge each other as we pass, and how papa straightens up, and how happy he is! In these moments, if I were not a good girl, I could have my allowance doubled, or all the diamonds in the shop windows. It was on returning from just such a stroll that I questioned my dear old papa about the two musketeers that are to open fire next Thursday. Immediately he grew grave and answered:

"They are two charming men—charming, that expresses it. Much too good for a——"

"Madcap like me. Agreed. Why do you let mamma put things into your head, you, who have such sound judgment? It is shameful!"

Now, nothing irritates papa so much as the discovery of mamma's exaggerated influence over him.

"Put things into my head! Put things into my head, indeed! I will not permit you to say that your mother puts things into my head. I can judge men at a glance. The duke (papa was a prefect under the Empire) used always to say: 'Givernay—he is my hand and eye.' Do you know that, little one? I should think I know the saying of the duke. At the age of three I had already heard it told so often in the family that I never said 'papa' without immediately adding 'hand,' 'eye.'"

"Why, papa dear, you know very well that I am of the duke's opinion, and that is the reason I want you to guide me a little with your experience. I am not a judge of men myself, and suppose both these gentlemen should please me next Thursday?"

Evidently this contingency has not been thought of. And, nevertheless, suppose I should be smitten with both of them, with the one who is no longer young, and with him who is not yet thirty? Papa's eye, celebrated by Morny, grew large and round. He reflected. How amused I was!

"These two gentlemen," said he finally, "are certainly both capable of pleasing. However, I know one of them better, and therefore am disposed to favor him. He is a companion of the Imperial, Monsieur de Nivert, forty-three, cultured and high-spirited."

"What does he do?"

Papa wrinkled his brow and racked his brain in an endeavor

to think what M. de Nivert could possibly do; after which he concluded, pitifully enough.

"I believe he doesn't do anything!"

And then he immediately resorted to mamma's mode of defense; he considered the two collectively.

"But, on the other hand," said he, "the other gentleman is a young man with a brilliant future. He is Judge of the Exchequer, and not yet thirty. Just think of it! Gaston Salandier will be director-general of a great administration some day, or a minister, perhaps. And then he is very good looking."

Poor M. de Nivert! It seems after all that his most brilliant qualities are possessed by M. Salandier! This freak of Dame Fortune begins to make me sympathetic.

"But," said I, after a few moments' reflection, "it seems to me that mamma was hesitating among four possible matches for me, and not between two."

Papa smiled.

"Yes; but after thoroughly considering the candidates, we have decided that two only are worthy of the prettiest girl in Paris. "For," he added, kissing me, "you are the prettiest girl in Paris."

Poor papa, I should like a husband like him. And just think how desperate mamma makes him!

Let us sum up the situation: Fate decrees that I shall become the wife of a serious young man, or of a middle-aged fashionable man of the world. Let me think a moment. No; I have never seen even the picture of the brilliant Judge of the Exchequer, who may, perhaps, be minister. But I think I noticed Baron de Nivert at a club entertainment. It seems to me that he has not much hair, but, by way of compensation, as mamma would say, he has a small stomach—oh, quite small. On the whole, he is not distasteful to me, for the baron, if I remember rightly, is very elegant and stylish in his dress.

Well, the die is cast! Idle nobleman or plebeian with a future, it is one of you two, gentlemen, who will wed—in January—Mademoiselle Juliette Givernay.



THE PRESENTATION.

It is over. The presentation took place last night, and I must jot down the story of that memorable evening for the amusement of my old age.

Well, last night, at five minutes to eight, when my maid had assured me that all our guests had arrived, I made my appearance in the drawing-room. Entering a room is my forte. I don't think I have often failed in it. I walk straight ahead, gazing steadily before me over the eyes of those present; I do not see, nor do I wish to see any of those who are looking at me. I choose, on the contrary, as a point of direction, some old lady settled comfortably in an armchair, or some inoffen-



sive old friend of papa's, or simply mamma. Invariably all conversation ceases at once, and all eyes are centred on me. What wonderful tact I possess, and isn't it a pity to be compelled to exercise it in such a limited sphere?

Besides my parents, my suitors, and myself, the diners yesterday were Count and Countess d'Aube, nobility of the Empire, whose combined ages would make a century and a half—insufferable bores, but fine people withal; Madame Salandier, the mother of the young Judge of the Exchequer, bourgeoisie, with a protruding forehead, round eyes and a ridiculous toilet, who showed much embarrassment at finding herself in our society.

At table M. de Nivert sat on mamma's right and M. Salandier on her left. I found myself seated between Madame Salandier and M. de Nivert. Madame Salandier immediately began talking to me in quite a patronizing tone that quickly irritated me. She extolled the serious character of her son, whom she proudly called "my own." "My own" retires every night at ten. She also offered me a few cursory glimpses of the qualities she expected her future daughter-in-law to possess—her deportment, economy and domestic habits—"with occasionally a reception or an evening at the theatre, of course; that is necessary in the position which 'my own' occupies."

In the meantime "my own," quite at his ease and stroking from time to time his pointed beard (he is really very handsome), was holding forth on the reduction of the public debt.

Papa, mamma, M. d'Aube, Mlle. Espalier, and even old Madame d'Aube, who is as deaf as a post, listened with open mouths, and Madame Salandier whispered in my ear:

"Listen to him. Not a minister is there that knows as much about it as he does——"

I looked at M. de Nivert. He met my glance with one of discreet irony, and immediately we felt like comrades, two exiles from the same country who had fallen among barbarians.

M. de Nivert is not handsome, but it is astonishing what an immense advantage he has gained over his rival by simply not saying a word about the public debt. In pouring me a glass of wine he paid me a neat compliment upon my toilet, saying that there was something truly elegant and uncommon about it. And then he began to talk of dress in a low tone, while "my own" continued his harangue for the benefit of papa and mamma, who do not know how to add up the household accounts, and of M. d'Aube, who is an old imbecile, and of Madame d'Aube, who is deaf. The handsome judge, however, is not stupid if he is pedantic. In a few moments he saw that he was boring us.

"This conversation," said he, "must be quite tiresome to Mademoiselle."

"Oh, no," I replied artlessly, "I was not listening."

And I had the joy of seeing a look of dismay spread over the countenances of my parents and the good Espalier, while Madame Salandier glared at me like a bonze who has just seen a street arab of Paris make a face at his Buddha.

M. de Nivert smiled.



THE MAGIC HERB*

By H. M. LEETE.

"I come from far Tarifa,
A town by the sunny sea;
My sire is bold Aquifa,
Who lives by piracy."

SO sang Basco while he unsaddled his horse and picketed him out for the night. As he threw down the stone he was hammering with he glanced up, and a malediction ended the verse:

"Esperate! Burro! Esperate!" he called, hurrying after the pack, which he could just see bobbing about above the bushes.

"You faithless one," he gasped, as he grasped the burro by the tail, "would you leave me supperless, you shameless deserter? It is true there is little grass on the 'potrero,' but I intended to give you some meal from my own supper. You should not jump to conclusions, Chico 'mio'."

Chico lowered his ears contritely over his nose, and gave a very long bray for such a short burro. This put Basco in mind of his unfinished song:

"There's a world of flowers fair,
In the town by the sunny sea;
But the fairest flower there
Is the maid who waits for me."

"Now, Chico Valdon," said he, "it's your turn." But Chico

*Written for Short Stories.

was either too modest, or thought he had sufficiently distinguished himself, so Basco resumed his lecture:

"It's a very bad habit of yours, Chico Valdon, leaving me in that way. If you would only try to leave me like that when I mount in the morning, but no, you monument of perversity, you insist on stopping then." Saying this he laid off the pack, and began to prepare his supper, but still found time to converse with Chico.

"Now, if you were a horse, you wouldn't be so stupid. Why was it, I wonder, that your great-great-grandfather disgraced his family by eating thistles? And why should you suffer for his bad taste? Now, I'll tell you, Chico, what I would do if I were you. I would try to find a magic herb which would transform me into a horse again. Why not try cactus, Chico? I am sure that plant would be able to give you some points on the subject." Then glancing at his servant's bony, emaciated frame, he exclaimed:

"'Por Dios,' but perhaps you already have too many points. Between the rocks and your ribs, Chico Valdon, my pack would soon be ribbons, did we not reach home on the morrow."

It was a clear night in the latter part of July, and the scene one of those little bare spots (called "protreros" in California) on the summit of the Santa Ynez Mountains. Basco Valdon was a prospector returning from Randsburg. His trip had been fairly successful, for packed in the burrow's rawhide al-focas was about three thousand dollars in gold dust. Chico was his faithful henchman, and so fond had Basco become of him that he had bestowed upon him his own surname.

The next morning they were off before sunrise. For a while they dropped down the trail through the sweet-smelling chaparral, emerging at times into open spaces, where bright flowers nodded a gay good morning to them. At length the trail led them out on to a promontory that overlooked Montecito, the loveliest valley in all California.

The sun was just rising, and along the shore on the cold blue waters of the Pacific there lay a glittering, golden path. Upon this royal highway came the fiery steeds of the sun to awaken to life the splendid villas among the groves of oak, and orchards of lemon and olive. Here and there were untilled patches of rock, where some giant hand had sown great boulders, and Nature, as though ashamed of their sterility, had finally covered them with lichens.

Basco stopped his horse that he might better view the magnificent vista spread before him. In the centre of this valley on the creek bank was a little nucleus of adobes and cabins where his race lived. It was called Pueblo Consuelo, which is in English, Town of Rest, or Consolation. Either interpretation would be very apt, for no one ever saw anybody at work there, and the two saloons did a thriving business in selling consolation to the resting inhabitants.

Basco could just distinguish the red tile roof of Don José Roderiques, the wine merchant, whose daughter made the world very happy for him just now. There had been times, though, when she had turned it into a veritable purgatory. Six months before he had gone to Randsburg at her bidding, with the promise that if he returned successful she would marry him. It had seemed pretty hard then to be exiled from home, to seek mere gold in a climate hotter than Tophet, but that was all over now.

What a beautiful world it was, thought Basco, to be young, in love and happy. He wondered what Estrella was doing now, Estrella whose sparkling eyes would soon give him greeting, and with whom he would soon be married, for why wait longer, now that he had the requisite——

"Jesu Madre!" Where was that burro? He drove the spurs into his horse, and dashed madly down the trail. Half way down the mountain he halted sharply to look for signs, but the trail was too stony to show any footprints. Surely the little scoundrel could not have come that far. He turned his panting horse back and followed up every branching trail. He investigated suspicious looking clumps of brush. As he rode along he shouted anxiously:

"Holla! Burro! Vamos!"

Alternately he cursed and coaxed, but no burro rewarded his search. Perhaps Chico had found a short cut home, and would be waiting for him at the corral; so he rode on down, but his heart was full of foreboding, and he sang no more of those gay Spanish ballads. At the foot of the trail he turned into the rough roadway that led into his claim two or three miles removed from Pueblo Consuelo. Chico was not there.

The next day and for two following days Basco hunted fruitlessly for the lost burro. At last, on the evening of the third day he sat gloomily down in his cheerless cabin. What would his companions say when he returned thus empty-handed?

And far worse, what would Estrella say when he told of the wealth he had so foolishly lost? Nothing but jeers and scorn awaited him.

"Oh, Chico Valdon, why did you desert me?" he moaned aloud, "had you not left me so, you fit one for perdition, I would have kept you and fed you till you died of repletion, and never a saddle should have sat on your back. My horse would have envied you, and sought everywhere for thistles, that he might eat and become like you."

Ah, that was it; the miserable beast was hunting for the magic plant which would turn him into a horse. Basco groaned. It was his fault, after all, for had he not suggested that very thing to Chico on the mountain-top?

But perhaps Estrella did care for him a little. He would go and tell her truthfully how hard he had worked for her, and, what was harder, had saved for her, and perhaps she might not be so cruel as to turn him away. To think was to act. He arose, and carefully shaved and dressed himself. He waxed his moustachios into two fine, keen points, and with infinite care tied his flame-colored scarf; then, as he surveyed himself in the glass he observed:

"You might wed with a much worse-looking fellow than I, Señorita Roderiques."

After Basco had stopped to admire the beauty of the morning, Chico jogged hurriedly on. So he always insisted on stopping in the morning, did he? Well, he would like to know who insisted on stopping now, and what for? Nothing but a paltry sunrise. Chico snorted contemptuously, and turned off the trail. Now he would have a chance to look for that potent plant which Rasco spoke of last night. As he trotted along he kept a sharp eye on either side, but saw nothing except the sage, poppies and other plants with whose acrid juices he was already too familiar. Well, who wanted to be a horse, anyway? Awkward, helpless creatures with weak, defective voices. For his part, he would be satisfied if he might find some plant which could by its magic turn him into the semblance of a respectable burro again. He had paused now under the shade of a bay tree far from the trail. What a nuisance it was to always have a pack riding one! How pleasant it would be to ride the pack a while! He lay down and rolled on it, but even using his ears as a balance he could not stay on

top. How hot and heavy it was! If he could only find two trees close enough together he might scrape it off. He looked around, but there were none—brush everywhere.

By and by the sun went down, then Chico began to be very hungry indeed. He sought the trail and trotted on down the mountain. At the foot of the trail he took the road for Pueblo Consuelo. About midnight he halted by the rickety pole fence which surrounded the house and various out-buildings of Don José Roderiques, the wine merchant. Now Chico had some friends in this gentleman's stable, and being very hungry, he undoubtedly thought himself a friend in need. After some search he found a hole in the fence, which, with a little squeezing, admitted him and his pack. He found the stable locked, and to his gentle inquiry through the window, he received no response. This sort of treatment wounded his feelings, and he began dejectedly to look elsewhere for entertainment.

In a far corner of the enclosure stood an old dilapidated barn. Toward this Chico wearily turned his steps. Here, too, he found everything unwelcoming and silent. He walked around. Ha! here was an opening. He looked in. The barn was half full of loose hay, but the opening was a mere crack left for the entrance of cats. Even as he looked, a cat darted out between his feet. Chico kicked at it as it passed, with each foot consecutively, and then with all four collectively. He hated cats. They had not the least conception of harmony. Chico looked longingly through the crack. It might not be the magic plant his master spoke of, but if it were only potent enough to appease his appetite, he would be satisfied. He really must have some of that hay; but how? He nosed the edge of the door, and made a discovery. He found that while the door had been solidly nailed, the last board of the door was quite loose. This he seized in his teeth. By the jawbone of his ancestor! It yielded! Then he settled resolutely back and the board fell with a crash. What a deafening noise! He stood perfectly still and listened. If those village curs heard that he might as well quit. But happily for him, the canine gentry were all out of town attending a caucus over in the next parish. Not a sound. Now he could get his head and shoulders in, but that hampering old pack would not let him enter. After a brief struggle he stopped to listen again, with one ear cocked forward, the other back. Everything was still. It was a risky thing to do, but he guessed he would have to do it. He

walked away several yards from the barn, then turning, wildly charged the crack in the door. There was a moment's anxious suspense, then the much-tried girth gave way, and Chico found himself inside the barn, and the pack outside.

At the end of the second day the pile of hay began to wear a neatly barbered look, and Chico began to feel a slight abatement of appetite. Indeed, it seemed as though he ought, for his flanks began to exhibit an astounding rotundity; in fact, he thought after it became dark he would go out and take the air. However, when he attempted that he found himself several inches too wide. This was interesting. He looked thoughtfully over his shoulder at the hay. Well, it didn't really matter much. There was hay enough to last him for some little time, and it was comforting to know that if he was a prisoner, he was at least his own jailer.

He stood by the door and watched the yellow moon rise. Chico liked the moon; not for any sentimental reason, but because the moon was always cool and pleasant, and never sent pestering swarms of flies to trouble him. Pretty soon he heard the sound of music. He listened critically. They were probably doing that abominable and unnecessary thing called dancing. It was silly enough to work and perspire in the daytime, without doing the same thing over again at night. Besides, how sacrilegious it was to waste music that way! To be sure, there were many sounds more pleasing than that of the wretched scraping violin. For instance, his own ravishing voice surpassed it by far. Why, come to think of it, he hadn't brayed for three whole days. Well, now, he would show these good people what an artist could do. He took a long breath, but did not expend it as he had intended, for it suddenly occurred to him that his possession of the barn was not exactly legal, and that undesirable consequences might follow his braying. At last he dozed and fell asleep.

Chico was wakened from his nap by the voice of his master. He opened his eyes very wide. Not ten feet from the door stood his master with a woman. Now, what was he doing there at that hour with that pitiable creature, who could never ride astride? Would they never cease talking? Chico would not interrupt the conversation, for he was a well-bred Spanish burro, and he knew better than that. He filled himself with air, and waited patiently for a pause, when he might make

some interesting remarks of his own. Meanwhile he listened, and this is what he heard:

"Basco Valdón, how can I believe you? How could you lose your burro so, as though it were a handkerchief out of your pocket?" And Estrella drew herself disdainfully away from him.

"But, Estrella, it happened thus: I was standing on Punto del Loco, looking down here, and wondering, dear one, what you were doing, and thinking how happy we should be now that we had the riches, and dreaming so of the future, I forgot the accursed burro, and the thrice accursed gold, and when I awoke they were gone. And I have searched these three days everywhere, under every bush on the mountain-side, yet can not find them. Won't you believe me, Estrella?"

Her black eyes flashed scornfully, and she said:

"Father says, Señor Valdón, that you have probably lost the burro, but not as you say. He thinks you have lost him at cards. Why do you not tell me the truth? I know that you gamble, and love wine too well, but I did not suppose that you would lie to me."

She looked very distant and cold to him in her white dress, her hair smoothed back from her proud little face, and her slim figure held haughtily erect. Would she never believe him or relent? For a moment he thought of confessing the sin she accused him of, perhaps she might then take pity on him. Then his manhood asserted itself, and he said brokenly:

"Well, I cannot make you believe, Estrella; but here are these hands which you may see have been worn by something harder than cards. And here is myself, whom you know to have been absent from you six long, weary months. Believe me, I pray you, 'carísima.'" But she still avoided his outstretched, begging hands. Making the sign of the cross, and lifting his hands to heaven, he murmured, "Santa María, I pray thee, bear me witness that I tell the truth!"

Then a long scraggly head shot out from the crack in the barn, and, in a voice never to be forgotten, Chico gravely corroborated his master's story. At the first terrible sound Estrella, frightened and repentant, fled trembling to Basco, who, while he had not expected an answer to his prayer from just that source, found no difficulty in accommodating himself to it. She laughed and cried hysterically, and he tried as best he

might to soothe her with all the pet names he had long pent in his heart.

Chico at length became impatient and remonstrated. This time Basco recognized his voice, and exclaimed:

"Why, that's Chico!" Then noting the width of the aperture, he added: "But the little wretch has lost my pack."

And now let it redound to the credit of Estrella that it was not till she had promised faithfully to be Basco's sweetheart forever and ever if necessary, that, in releasing Chico from his prison, they stumbled over the pack in the high weeds by the door, with its precious load intact.

When Basco and Chico wended their way to the cabin that night Basco threw his arm around Chico's neck and made many confidences into the burro's willing ear.

"Brother Chico," he said, "for I am more an ass than you, if you had not spoken to-night when you did I should never have recognized you again. Why did you leave me, you sly deceiver? Eh!" tweaking his ear, "were you looking for that magic herb?" Chico did not deny it. "Well," continued Basco craftily, "I do not think you will ever find it, for there is no such herb, and I am very glad, Chico Valdon, that you could not find such an one, for if you had not been a burro to-night I could not have been a bridegroom next Sabbath."

If any one in the quiet valley had chanced to be awake at cock crow that morning they might have heard floating down from the mountain side this fragment of song:

"When fortune favors me,
To the town by the sunny sea
Swift my return shall be,
To merrily wed with thee."



A LANCASHIRE NIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENT*

By ARTHUR HANDEL HAMER



T Jim o' Crammed Harry's they were holding a beef night. A beef night is this: Amongst the moorland farms of Lancashire, each farmer kills a cow in his turn. The meat is taken up by neighbors, and a night is appointed, to be from a fortnight to a month afterwards, on which they shall all come to pay for it. This congregation suggests itself naturally as an opportunity for festivity. But it is not regarded as an occasion for unsubsidized hospitality, for that would be to forget the businesslike nature of the proceedings, and to detract from their proper profitableness. Each visitor, therefore, pays sixpence more than is due for meat, and, in return, the hostess provides rum and tea "bagging."

Most of those expected had arrived. They sat about wherever there happened to be chair or settle, and did not, as yet discover any individuality. Each face wore the same expression of determination not to commit itself to any expression at all; each body the same aspect of fear of attracting attention if it were comfortable.

The hostess and her daughters bestirred themselves to get the meal on to the table. It was time its beneficent influence was at work.

When a voice broke out into natural tones, and exclaimed with pleasurable excitement, 'Why, here's owd Liz!' every one stirred, smiled, exclaimed, and turned toward the door, and felt at ease.

A figure entered, muffled in a shawl; the eldest daughter of the house went up to it and took the shawl away. A tall, thin old woman was disclosed, with a yellow skin and black eyes.

*From "Chapman's Magazine."

She had a round forehead, a round chin, thin lips, and a small nose. Her face was framed in a woolen cap which covered her head and was tied beneath her chin. On the cap were three knots of pink, green, blue, and yellow ribbons, one on the top of her head and one over each ear. On her shoulders she had a small red-and-black check shawl, with one point down her back, and two, lying together to form one, on her chest. Her dress was of cotton, and the color of it was buff, with darker spots. It was flounced from hem to waist.

"Nay!" exclaimed the hostess, affecting to disbelieve her eyes. "See, sit thee dahn 'ere. Well! and 'ow art a?"

"Oh, a durn't grumble," answered the old woman. "A've sin young uns a good dyal wur."

"A think they're noan med same as they were i' thy time."

"Not they, they're sawft! A worked in t' pit when a were seven, and a s' mak' up seventy-seven next tahm. A've buried two fellys an' bagged (dismissed or sent 'away) another. A think a've done fairly weel—to say as a'm no scholar."

"Whatever med thi bak thi last felly, Mrs. Grime?"—from one of the men.

"He were noan wick enough."

"It'll tak a wick un to ples thee!"

"It'll tak a wicker nor thee soshow."

But the bagging was announced.

"A durn't know if it'll ples all on ye," said the hostess; "but we're like to do as weel as we con."

"Yay!" "Sure!" "Ay, ay!" and the company, with the like sympathetic murmurs, took their seats. A time of silence followed. They were of a race which does not chatter during business.

Soon the daylight looked but sleepily through the small stone-framed windows of the farmhouse. Jim o' Crammed Harry rose and lighted the lamp which hung by the wall.

A girl drew down the white cotton blinds. Shining faces which had looked steadily downwards looked up and around. The genial skirmish which proclaimed the end commenced between the hostess and her guests.

"Nay! Tha durn't usen finishing so soon."

"A've done very weel, thank yo."

"Durn't be so shame-faced, mon; tha'll ne'er get naught for bein' feared of axin'. Nay, if tha durn't eat a s' think that's not liked."

"A've liked very weel, thank yo."

"Now, Tommy, art stowin' (stopping) awready?"

"A con see nought for it but either stowin' or bastin'."

The meal done with, old men and women filled their pipes, and the floor was cleared for dancing. A simple solemnity and much perspiration marked the performance. Nevertheless, faces of strong-limbed girls began to brighten under the lamp, and eyes, sparkling and emboldened, and lips relaxed like rose-buds just opening, and bosoms panting a little under simple blouse or bodice, made lads to feel "sawft like."

Then the soberness wore away, a gigglish humor came to the top, and the young men grew bolder. Then it began to enter into the heads of the girls that they were getting silly, and dancing ceased.

"Is there onybody 'ull gie us a bit ov a twitter?" suggested the host.

"Liz 'ull sing!" "Ay, Liz!" "Let Liz!" "Come on, Liz!" "Gie us a gradely one, owd champion!"

Old Liz laid down her pipe and rose with simplicity. She advanced to the midst of the floor and straightened her figure, and, throwing out an arm like a branch of ancient hawthorn, commenced in a thin shout a song descriptive of a collier's life.

She went down on one knee at the chorus and hewed at an imaginary piece of coal. Her eyes glittered, and her cheeks flushed, and white hairs escaped from under her cap. She wielded her imaginary pick with triumphant strokes; one could see the bowels of the earth yield up their treasure.

There was a squall of applause at the end, and amidst the clapping of the women and the deep staccato notes of approval of the men, sincere as the barks of a dog, she was escorted, a little exhausted, to her seat.

At that moment the door was a little fumbled open. There was a small boy.

"Why, it's Mrs. Crawshaw's lad."

"Come forrard, my lad."

"They mot a' gotten back fro' Thrutchden."

"'As your mother come back, Bobby?"

"Yay," said the lad, with a finger in his mouth; then, taking it out and assuming a solemnity which ill-disguised a thrill of awesome pleasure and importance, "Mr. Grime were deein'."

That was the husband which Mrs. Grime had "bagged" three winters before. They had lived together then twenty

years, and no one knew the reason of their parting; but all were agreed that living by herself was spoiling old Liz, her health and temper. She would have no one in the house; and the neighbors had had almost to force their help upon her when she was ill.

A pallor was now in the stead of the flush on her face. The new-filled pipe that she had been given fell from her fingers, and slid from her knee to the ground, where it broke into pieces. She leaned a little forward in her chair, with a hand pressing upon each arm of it, and her back straight.

"'Ow lung is it sin' tha geet back?" she demanded, after a breathing space.

"We geet back at dinner-time."

Old Liz rose up and requested her shawl.

"Whatever art 'a boun' to do?" inquired the hostess.

"A'm boun' to go lookin' at 'im."

"Tha can go noan to neet; tha can get no train."

"A'm boun' to walk it."

"It's six mile by t' soonest road, woman!"

"A'm goin' t' soonest road."

"That'll never goo o'er t' tops to neet?"

Old Liz did not answer. She had reached the door; she opened it and went out.

They looked at one another.

"Now," exclaimed the hostess to her husband, "tha mun follow 'er. Look sharp, man!"

"A'll goo too!" "So will I!" "And I!"

"Nay, durn't let so many. It'll nobbut vex 'er."

The host and his eldest girl were decided upon. They were ready quickly, and forth into the calm night. Every one left the hot housepart and came outside, and stood in the yard watching them go. Old Liz was visible. She was crossing a bent which stood up against the sky. Her figure seemed to have grown larger, and it progressed swiftly. A silence fell upon the groups outside the farmhouse. They could not have denied that a feeling had come into their minds that she was moving forward by some means more easy than walking, and less human. She commenced to descend, and was swallowed up by the hollow beyond the bent; and they watched Jim o' Crammed Harry and his daughter appear on the summit and be swallowed up after her. Then they went inside to talk about it.

The night had the quality of weirdness. Moonless, it was still not very dark; yet the stars were not bright and frank. And so quiet was it in the cloughs, so still was every branch, and twig, and stem, and leaf, that you felt you had intruded on a night set apart for the discussion of the secrets of Nature. And the silence was like that which follows the intrusion of a stranger into a circle of confidential friends.

The six miles to be traveled consisted of one plain intersected by the small beginnings of cloughs, and sloping from the foot of a rough semicircle, or wide angle, of fell. This plain was much diversified—firm and well-drained fields of good green grass, with hawthorn hedges, neighbored by brown and mossy ones, where heather and bilberry looked from banks and ridges on to reeds and cotton grass beneath. Here and there sheltering ash or sycamore marked the site of stone-built cottages or cottage-farm, most likely staring with dead eyes into the night, dead because its heart-beat of handloom was stilled forever.

Then up the side of the fell, and over four miles across the lonely moors until the lights of the vale in which lay Thrutchden came into view beneath, as thick as the stars above, and brighter, with a comfortable early brightness. Then the descent of nearly a mile into the village.

The farmer and his girl did not seek to overtake old Liz. A feeling which seemed one with the feeling of the night prevented them. They followed at a distance, which enabled them to keep her in sight, except occasionally, in the peopled darkness of a wooded hollow, or where a turn of a pathway divided them.

The figure in front unflaggingly pressed on. The fell was scaled by a side slope, and there it slackened, but never faltered.

"Hoo's possessed," muttered the farmer.

No other word had been spoken, and none other was, until the tops ought to have been nearly crossed. Then the girl clutched the man's arm with a whispered cry, "Hoo's fa'n!" They ran over the intervening ground and discovered old Liz on her knees.

Beneath them they thought they saw, stretched for miles and miles, a still calm lake.

Where were they?

The face of a lake silent amongst the hills is like the face of

a Sphinx. Dread of the unknown creeps over you as you gaze on it; terror of the secret on which absolute impassiveness can be founded.

To come upon such a sheet in the darkness, blankly usurping the hoped-for appearance of an inhabited valley, and stretching away among islands and capes into infinite distance and night was very awesome. They felt like children come into a secret room. Old Liz remained in an attitude of prayer, but uttered no sound. Jim o' Crammed Harry and his daughter gazed with lips parted, that their breathing might be noiseless.

"See," exclaimed the girl, in a little, "there's a leet in it."

"By th' lad, yer thee!"

Voices came from it. Then the purr of a distant rain.

"A con see a lot o' leets!" said the girl.

"A should think tha con," said her father. "It's mist. We're theer. Come on now, Liz."

Old Liz rose, but her limbs had grown stiff. The blaze of excitement had spent itself, and she was glad to accept an arm on each side of her.

They silently commenced the descent. The phantom lake melted away as they entered it, disclosing on its bed many a mile of yellow lights, and houses, and churches.

"Dost think it were like deein'?" reflectively spoke the old woman, when, nearing the village, they had arrived at a good road.

"Happen," said the farmer. "It was certainly quare till it were looked in t' face a bit."

When they found the right house the people were gone to bed, but the light of a fire, which had, as is usual, been left to burn until the morning, flickered comfortably through the window. The door was opened by a woman.

"Yo' mun excuse us," said Jim o' Crammed Harry, "but we'n come a-lookin' at Mr. Grime. This is 'is missus."

"Eh? Come forward; an' is this Mrs. Grime? Well, for sure. Can yo' find seats? Yo' mun excuse us bein' a bit upset like; we were noan expectin' company, yo' see."

"'Ow is 'e?"

"Well, 'e's rayther betther. But yo' mun see 'im."

"Will 'e stand it?"

"Eh? Stan' it? Ay, yo'll 'ave to excuse 'im bein' dressed up, yo' know, but 'e'll stan' it. A'll just go and get him ready."

'E's comin' down." The last "he" was her husband, who appeared at the bottom of the stairs in shirt and trousers. She introduced him by smiling apologetically, as if she were admitting a weakness, and enlightened him by saying, "They'n come a-lookin' at Silas."

Then she disappeared by the way he had come.

"They sen 'e were deein'," remarked Jim o' Crammed Harry.

"Ah! Ay—h'm—for sure—ay. Oh, A see! Yo' thought 'e were deein'? Nay, we're not expectin' 'im deein'. Not as we known on. Wheer's that fro'?"

"One o' Crawshay's lads browt it."

"It's surprisin' what tales gets about. It is; it's surprisin'. 'E fell into 't street an' 'urt 'is' ead a bit, that's aw. 'E'll be reet to morn. 'E will. He'll be reet to morn, as near as we can tell. We're expectin' so. Yo've come a great way 'appen?"

"Not so far fro' Ridge Fowt."

"An' yo'? It's a great way for sure. Hoo's put t' kettle on, A think. Ay, hoo' as. One o' t' lasses 'ull be down in a minute, a dare say. Hoo's 'ere. Come, lass, come, 'ere's folk starvin'. Look a bit wakken. Is there aught to sup? There isn't a wur 'ouse for keepin' aught to sup in. There isn't."

The wife shortly reappeared.

"'E's ready now. An' 'e is fain, a can tell yo'. 'E's reight glad——"

Old Liz remained seated and impassive.

"A come to see 'im when 'e were deein'," she remarked, in reply to the embarrassment which fell upon the company.

"Why, tha should fainer to see 'im now?"

"Ay? An' 'im to think 'e's gotten 'is own road!"

This reply gave pause to them all.

It silenced the married woman through her sympathy. It silenced the girl through her knowledge of Old Liz's obstinacy, and her perception of the strength of the foundation it was now resting on. It silenced the men through their proper dignity.

The situation was awkward.

Jim o' Crammed Harry looked at his daughter. There was faith in his eyes which showed that he had looked theré before, and not vainly.

The girl went up to the old woman, and placing her hands upon her, said, "A durn't think, Liz, but what that quare

White Lake were to show as you should forgive 'im—like as it were Life out o' Death when we begun to see t' lights in it. 'Appen they'll not come another time. Light is na given twice so oft, Liz."

So she led old Liz upstairs, and into the room where her husband lay waiting.

A leathery old man with keen blue eyes shining in the light of a candle. His shoulders were raised on pillows, and he held up his head. His face was pale, with high, clear-cut features, and clean shaven. His hair was white and soft and plentiful. His teeth were fairly good.

"Tha gets into aw sorts o' lumber," said old Liz.

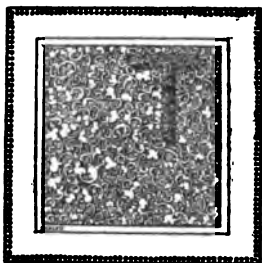
"Am a like to goo back wi' thee?" queried the old man.

"Yay; it'll save my legs, 'appen, next time th' art deein'."



THE TRUE LIGHT*

BY ELISE POLKO



HE nobles of Brussels, the splendid capital of the Netherlands, led a merry life in the year of our Lord 1521. The court of the Spanish king, Charles V., oldest son of Philip of Austria and Johanna of Spain, was unusually magnificent, especially since 1520, when the young ruler had been crowned German emperor at Aix-la-Chapelle.

Money seemed to flow in streams. On every week-day there were grand tournaments, jousts, hunts and exhibitions by traveling players, each performance so imposing that by Sunday one could not say which was the most costly. The ladies of the court were beautiful and gay, the sky above their heads was as blue as the eyes of the emperor's lady love, fair Johanna van der Geeht, and no one had time to look at the dark storm clouds which were piling up on every side. The Spanish grandees were scarcely held in check, so great was their wrath because Charles V. had autocratically assumed the Spanish crown at the death of his grandfather Ferdinand.

There was a spirit of unrest in the German provinces also, for an audacious monk had risen up at Wittenberg and had, like a second Samson, laid his hands upon mighty foundations and shaken them; not, like Samson, the pillars of a proud palace, but the ancient, honored pillars of the holy Roman Catholic Church. Although he had not torn them down, they had tottered, and a cry of horror rang through the whole country. The Diet of Worms was just over, and the young emperor, by proclaiming that bold monk, Martin Luther, under the ban of the Empire, thought to destroy with one blow

* Adapted by Neil Carew, from the German, for Short Stories.

the serpent of schism that raised its hissing head. They disturbed his pleasure, all these strange and threatening things, so no one was allowed to speak of them. He was so young and powerful, and the star of love beamed brightly—the most beautiful woman of the Netherlands had pledged him her love for time and for eternity. Often his cares would be all dispelled by a single brilliant tournament or a smile of the lovely Johanna. And if that was not sufficient the emperor fled to the studio of his especial favorite, the far-famed Bernhard von Orlay. Charles V. used to spend hours there chatting with the merry painter. Bernhard von Orlay was but a few years older than his imperial master, and was an easy-going fellow, who took no thought of the morrow. He was a native of Ghent, the son of pious parents. After their death, when he was very young, Bernhard journeyed to Rome, full of ambition to be a painter. There he had the good fortune to become a pupil of Raphael of Urbino.

Bernhard von Orlay now began to work in earnest; but he watched more than he painted, and often stood for half a day behind the greatest of masters, gazing into the flood of light and color that flowed from his inspired brush. By degrees he, too, essayed portraits, and painted many a bold-faced man and soft-eyed woman. Then the luxurious life of old Rome took hold of him so firmly that he imagined that heaven itself could not be more beautiful. He was so well satisfied with earth that he forgot the eternal glory, and never thought of consecrating his brush to the service of the Lord and of the blessed Virgin. Therefore the holy images which he tried to draw at his master's bidding were failures. This vexed him, so he stayed at home for several days and painted a Madonna with a blue mantle and glittering crown, and took it triumphantly to his teacher. But Raphael looked long at the picture, his noble face became grave, his aristocratic lips closed firmly, and an angry light glowed in his eyes.

"You have painted there a forsaken ladylove," he said at last; "but never a divine Mary. I know now what your pictures lack—it is the true light! Pray that it may shine into your eyes! You paint too dark, Master von Orlay."

The pupil's heart was filled with defiance. He cut the picture in a hundred pieces, packed up his belongings and, without even taking leave of his teacher, he left Rome and returned to his own country. In Brussels, where he settled down, his

art was soon common talk. His large hunting pictures and the portraits of councilmen and their wives won him fame. It happened that the king's eye was attracted by a hunting piece in which the animals and men seemed almost alive. He immediately ordered the artist to paint him a similar picture, and to introduce the portrait of his favorite hound, which was so satisfactory that he had it copied in tapestry for his rooms. An order for the fair Johanna van der Geest's portrait followed, and when it was done it was so wonderfully lifelike that the young king appointed Bernhard von Orlay court painter on the spot. The treasurer counted out a whole bag of gold pieces to the painter, and the king, to have him always near, lodged him in the palace.

From that hour Bernhard von Orlay's reputation was assured. Every one wished to be painted by him, and Charles V. had all his pictures copied so that none should be lost to Brussels. Pupils gathered around him, but the artist had little fondness for bothering with them, for the luxurious life he led left him little time. The emperor quickly drew him into the stream of pleasure, and if his sovereign had not done so his own heart would have driven him to it. All his pictures were the work of a frivolous worldling. The colors glowed, the flesh seemed warm and throbbing; and yet this strange fellow had wonderful hours when he was tempted to burn everything that he had ever painted—when he felt as if he must break his easel into a thousand pieces.

At such times he stared gloomily in front of him, and his usually happy face looked like that of one who is weary unto death.

"Your pictures lack the true light. You paint too dark, Bernhard von Orlay!"

He murmured these memorable words over and over. Then he sprang up and began to paint. He closed his lips tightly, his eyes flashed angrily and he was lavish in the use of blue and gold—until his hand sank from exhaustion and the picture was no brighter than before. Then he fled from his work-room to forget his troubles in drinking and gambling.

However, the people valued the work of Bernhard von Orlay more and more, and his fame spread beyond the Netherlands. But the praise could not drown those words which seemed to come from heaven now that he who had spoken them had gone to that eternal home.

"You paint too dark!" it rang louder and louder. And Bernhard von Orlay began to live more wildly. He was determined not to hear those words. A strange fear and restlessness drove him from place to place, and the noisier his surroundings the better he was pleased. He went to holy mass only when the emperor showed himself there, and on such occasions the broad aisles of St. Gudule were like a flower garden, and the painter's thoughts were more worldly there than at home in his workroom.

Then it happened that Charles V. recalled a Flemish noble from Madrid, and he brought back to Brussels his young wife, a Spanish donna.

When she made her first appearance at court every one marveled at her singular beauty. She stood like a tropical flower among the women of the Netherlands. Her velvet skin was delicately brown, her lips were red, her nose was fine, her little teeth were white as snow, her figure was rounded, and her black hair was luxuriant; but he who met the glance of her dark eyes was as one bewitched. She charmed every one as if with a love potion—except the women and the emperor, whom the eyes of the fair Johanna rendered proof against these enchantments. What wonder that Bernhard von Orlay's heart was set aflame when he saw such beauty?

"In her eyes is the real life," he said joyfully. "If she loved me I could learn to paint Madonnas and angels. She must and shall love me!"

And it came to pass as he desired. Donna Ines sickened with longing for her home. The flower of the south could not withstand the northern blasts. Her cheeks became pale, her step languid, her eyes sad and weary. At last her elderly husband yielded to her earnest entreaties and agreed that, after the winter was over, she should go back to Spain for a year. But first he begged her to be painted by the court painter. She had no objection, and Bernard von Orlay set up his easel in the house of the woman he secretly loved.

And then that happened which so often happens when two warm, young hearts meet unobserved, and thoughts are exchanged with sweet lips and beautiful eyes—they imagined that they loved as two mortals had never loved before, and swore constancy for all eternity. Such love did not prevent Bernhard von Orlay from portraying his beloved with remarkable art. He was determined to get the true light into his

colors, and thought that now he could not fail. But, alas! in spite of all his pains the picture remained dark. Bernhard von Orlay threw down the palette and buried his face in his hands, and loud and louder the old words rang in his ears:

"Your pictures lack the true light."

"Where shall I find it if not here?" he lamented, throwing himself at his love's feet; but the sweetest lips in the world brought him no comfort. His unhappiness increased until one day the lovely Ines inquired so earnestly the cause of his sorrow that he could no longer keep it to himself, and repeated what Raphael had once said to him; and he asked her where he could find the true light if not in her eyes.

Then she gazed at him thoughtfully and said:

"I have good counsel with which to help you—and me, also, if you have the courage. Let us fly together to the land of light and love! Let Spain's sun shine on your head and my love warm your heart. You belong, like me, to the land of the blue sky! How can light come from your brush when you live and work in darkness?"

Thus she spoke, and who could resist her? Her speech was tempting, and he became convinced that she had spoken truly. The real light shone in the south. If he had stayed in Rome his pictures would have become bright.

They made plans for flight. They decided to leave the city on the last day of the year, and to hide in some small village until the end of the winter, when they could sail for Spain unnoticed. They chose the last of the year, because at that time there were to be great festivities to celebrate the betrothal of the emperor with Isabella, daughter of King Emanuel of Portugal, and in the excitement of the merrymaking the lovers thought to slip away unobserved.

The portrait of the donna was finished and was pronounced the best of all Master von Orlay's works. Even the cold husband of Donna Ines was moved to enthusiasm, and he placed the portrait in the hall of his house for the admiration of high and low. The curious crowd streamed from all directions to see it, and to praise both the master and the lovely woman whom he had depicted in surpassing beauty.

Donna Ines herself was gratified with this reflection of her charm. Even the emperor regarded the work with wonder, and whispered in the artist's ear that it was almost as maddeningly lovely as the picture of Johanna. Only one person, the

painter himself, contemplated it gloomily, and shook his head at the words of praise. "The true light is not there!" he repeated, and would have liked to tear the canvas into innumerable pieces.

When he went again to Ines and heard her say softly:

"Be patient, you foolish fellow, the light will soon come!" hope and faith returned and he longed to begin his pilgrimage toward the true light at the side of this enchantress. That he would be thought disloyal to his sovereign troubled him little. Besides, the emperor's stay in the Netherlands was already too long. There were uprisings in all parts of Germany, and Spain also was demanding King Charles.

Time passed slowly for the two conspirators, until finally the last day of the year, the holy Sylvester eve, arrived. Bernhard von Orlay had made full preparations for flight. The horses that were to carry them to Antwerp stood saddled before the door, and Donna Ines expected her gallant at the first chime of the bells, which should announce the new year.

The halls of the palace were thronged with guests, the players struck the strings of their instruments, richly dressed nobles passed to and fro, lords with their ladies, who moved slowly in stiff brocades and damasks. These brilliant Flemings were a contrast to the Spaniards who surrounded the emperor like a troop of sentinels. They glided like shadows among the laughing throng, and many a person felt a dread, as if of coming misfortune, when he suddenly encountered one of them.

Charles V. sat next his betrothed, the timid Isabella, and spoke murmured sweet words that made her smile; but the emperor's eyes roved in a forbidden direction while his child-like fiancée looked into her lap. The sovereign gazed mournfully at a beautiful fair-haired woman who stood, pale and sorrowful among the courtiers. It was Johanna van der Geest, whose heart received then the fatal blow which caused her death a few months later.

Bernhard von Orlay wandered among the crowd, feeling unusually impressed and serious. Here and there he paused to listen to a jest or to reply to the chaff that came from charming lips. But the wonderful thing was that he should be constantly thinking of his dead mother on this particular evening, although she had been out of his mind for so long a time.

She was a plain burgher's wife, who had taught her son but

one thing—to pray to all the saints, and especially to St. Aloysius, his patron saint. This evening he remembered vividly how she had gone to church with him on the last night of every year, and had prayed there. Since her death he had never been in a church on holy Sylvester eve. The stories of the inspired books were to him well-invented fairy tales, and he no longer remembered the little prayer for help that his mother had once taught him.

But now he suddenly felt that he must go again to church as he had done years ago. Seized by this idea, he looked about him and seemed to see among the crowd a tall woman with a rosary in her girdle, a gentle face turned toward him, a slender hand beckoning him—it was a vision of his dead mother. Bernhard von Orlay was compelled to follow.

He went down the broad steps and out into the square, like one in a dream. He made his way through empty snow-covered streets, silent save for the occasional heavy tread of the night watch, or the voices of the soldiers who drank and gambled in the barracks.

He scarcely knew whither he was going until lighted arched windows loomed up in front of him. He stood before an open church door. Within a requiem was being held. The catafalque stood in the middle of the church, the candles burned, the incense rolled toward him, the pious supplicants knelt. Before the altar stood a venerable monk, preaching to the mourners like a kind father to children in sorrow. Just as Bernhard von Orlay slipped into the church and took his place in the shadow of a pillar the priest was speaking in the following manner:

“On one holy Sylvester eve it happened that St. Aloysius, deep in meditation, walked in the monastery garden, one of the holy books in his hand. He was to preach that evening to the brothers on the vanity of earthly pleasures, and the eternal duration of heavenly joys. In order to find solitude he opened the gate of the garden and strolled along through the wood until he came to a cave, the entrance to which was known to him alone. And when he had sat down upon a stone and had opened the holy book a sunbeam fell upon it from above and illumined the text, ‘A thousand years are as a day in Thy sight.’

“St. Aloysius read these words over and over, but he seemed unable to take them into his soul. His proud spirit

rebelled against the words, doubt raised its snake-like head. A terrible fear seized him, drops of sweat stood out upon his forehead, he struggled with the thought. His brain could not grasp the wonderful text and his foolish heart would not believe it. At last he cried aloud in his trouble, 'Lord, have mercy upon me, and give me light!' And at once a strange feeling of rest came upon him, the hard thoughts melted away, and he bowed his head on his breast and slumbered.

"When he awoke it was dark in the cave, and the distant sound of the vesper bells fell upon his ear. He arose, mindful of his holy office, and went slowly over the snowy path to the monastery. But new snow must have fallen while he slept, for he could find no trace of his steps. The monastery chapel was brilliantly lighted, at which he wondered. He walked in without hesitation and went toward the altar. But when he came to his choir seat, lo! it was occupied by another, and that other was one whom St. Aloysius had never seen. All around, wherever he looked, were strangers who stared at him in astonishment. The walls of the little chapel seemed strangely altered, the blessed Virgin was resplendent in costly new robes; but he recognized the stone crucifix behind the altar, gray and weatherbeaten. A vague terror overcame the monk, his legs trembled under him, and he was obliged to lean against the altar. Then they all surrounded him and put curious questions to him, and asked where he came from, and what had brought him there; and when he began to speak they shook their heads and drew back. He inquired after one of the brothers who had been dear to him, but no one knew his name. Then he asked to see the roll of the monastery, and they brought him the heavy books and laid them on the altar, and St. Aloysius turned the leaves. 'Here is the name you seek,' said one of those who stood near him, pointing to a yellow page, 'and the abbot at that time was one Aloysius. He disappeared, leaving no trace of his whereabouts. No one knows what happened to him. That took place just two hundred years ago on Sylvester eve.'

"Then the monk stood before the altar and lifted up his hands, and his face was glorified like that of an angel. Then he smote his breast and cried: 'All here is vain, but a thousand years are as a day in Thy sight! I believe, as truly as I hope to see Thy eternal glory.' And when he had thus spoken he fell down, and nothing was left of him but a heap of dust.

"And at this the bells of the monastery rang out, as do now those of this church of Our Blessed Lady, the twelfth and last hour of the dead year. But as the words of St. Aloysius brought a wonderful peace to the pious brothers, so does the holy saying still bring peace and comfort to the living as well as to the dead. All is vanity in this world, but a thousand years are as a day before the Lord. Jesus Christ be praised, the same yesterday, to-day and forever. Amen."

When the priest finished his homely sermon Bernhard von Orlay raised his eyes like one who awakens from a dream. He felt happy and light, as if he were walking upon air. His first glance fell upon a lovely maiden who was so radiant in the light of the tapers which shone upon her young face that the painter imagined himself to be looking upon a living saint. The large eyes were fixed upon the priest, the hands were folded in her lap, the rosary hung between the slender fingers and the lips repeated an "Ave Maria." Near her knelt an old woman—Bernhard von Orlay felt as if his mother were again before his eyes. The clouds of incense rolled nearer, the consecrated candles flamed up more brightly, the silvery child-voices sang from the choir, "Gloria in excelsis Deo!"

Then the man of the world, standing in the shadow of the pillar felt as if a veil were lifted before his soul as before his bodily eyes. The bells of the churches of Ghent rang in his ears as they had rung years ago when he knelt at the side of his beloved mother, and from above, just in front of him, on the brow and in the eyes of the beatified maiden, fell a ray of that light which he had sought in vain for so many, many years. He knew now whence it came. The pleasures of the world suddenly seemed poor and worthless, and one passionate longing only filled his heart—to serve henceforth with body and soul, with might and mind, Him from whom the only light came, before whom a thousand years are as a day.

From that time forth Master Bernhard von Orlay was a painter of the holy church. The companions of his wild revels no longer knew him. How he managed to break with the fascinating Donna Ines is nowhere chronicled, but he did so, for she returned to Spain without Bernhard von Orlay, and when she came back to the Low Countries again the two were never seen together.

The first painting of Bernhard von Orlay's which has come down to posterity uninjured shows the interior of a church,

with the holy Bishop Notbertus preaching to devout hearers. The noble face of the ecclesiastic is full of mildness and piety. Opposite him the master has introduced his own picture. He stands there with the expression of one whose fetters have been loosed, and looks up hopefully. Below the pulpit are an old woman, and a lovely maiden whose bright eyes are raised to heaven in spiritual ecstasy. St. Notbertus is encircled by a golden halo, and a part of the brightness falls upon the figure of the girl before him. The life and grouping of the figures is masterly, but most notable of all is the light in which the whole seems to swim. No one had ever seen such radiance in a picture of Bernhard von Orlay's. It shimmered and trembled like liquid, transparent gold.

The artist contemplated his painting with satisfaction.

"Now it is clear within me, now the true light illumines the work of my hands," he said.

Upon the heedless worldling a ray of that light had fallen which blinded Paul when he persecuted the Lord.

The artist's life was changed now. Even before the emperor left Brussels he begged permission to live in a little house of his own instead of in the palace, and he spent most of his time in his workroom. Enthusiastic pupils came to him, some of whom became famous under his zealous teaching, such as Johannes von Calcar, Michael Coxis and Cornelius van Mander.

Soon a rose bloomed in the little window of his house. The fair maiden from the Church of Our Blessed Lady was his true and dearly loved wife. Now that he always had this glorified face before him in which shone a light of innocence and piety such as he had never seen before his pictures became ever brighter and brighter.

Bernard von Orlay lived to be nearly seventy years old, and was universally loved and honored. He passed away quietly on New Year's eve, 1560. His dimmed eyes rested upon the picture of Notbertus preaching in the church. At the stroke of the last hour he raised himself, stretched out his arms and cried with a firm voice:

"A thousand years are as a day in Thy sight. 'Gloria in excelsis Deo'!"

And as he sank back on his couch his expression was that of one who has died in the peace of God.

THE BRINK OF A FUTURE*

BY FRANK H. SWEET.



AT PINAUD stood on one of the hills which overlooked Portland. Behind him was the forest and his past; the little cabin by the river, with his dugout hauled up on the bank, his traps and fishing poles and battered muzzle-loading rifle. Before him—what? The afternoon sun flung its luminous arms into the city, while the forest behind was becoming dark with its own shadows. The future had come to him in the gold of his evening, but it was the future of his dreams. Already he had forgotten the past.

Of his possessions he had only brought his "feedle," and the letter which a passing trapper had left at his cabin. The one was to go with him into his future to be "educat, po-leesh," the other was the magic key which would open the way.

This had been the one grief of his life, that he was "no educat, no po-leesh." Music to him was only a common, natural thing, like breathing, without notes or science. What matter if he could wake the hermit thrush and oriole and bobolink to ecstasy, or bring moisture to the hardest eyes, or lightness to the most sluggish of feet, or gentleness to the heart that had bruised itself into callousness? It was only what came to him naturally, without effort. He was no musician, he would tell you with a deprecatory wave of his hand, "Non, non, M'sieur, not'ing but a poor little Canuck, who love de feedle." He had had no time "for learn de true music."

But now it was all here in the letter which he held so tightly in his hand; and though white frost was stealing

*Written for Short Stories.

thickly into his hair, and rheumatism taking possession of his limbs, he went down the slope as eagerly and diffidently as a schoolboy on his first journey into the world of learning.

Only once before in his life had the unexpected come to him, a thousand dollars from the very estate that was responsible for this letter. Half of it had gone promptly as an incentive in a "feedle contest," and little Pierre who had carried off the popular vote, and so won the prize, was now at the Boston Conservatory of Music for his "educat, po-leesh." Bat's thoughts reverted to him as he went on down the slope, and he resolved that some of this greater fortune should flow over into the future of the poor shoemaker's son.

When he reached the sidewalks of the great city he went more slowly, for he tried to take his hat off to every lady he met, and to smile at every child, and to assist all those he thought overloaded with bundles. When a woman happened to look at him he dropped his gaze to the sidewalk, and when a child, he stopped as though ready to enter into conversation. Once he patted a dog, and the dog turned and followed him. And at another time he picked up a dirty, barefooted child that was crying in a gutter, and the child turned and followed him also.

But at length he reached the place indicated by the letter, and was received with marked consideration by the lawyer who rose as he entered.

"I am glad you came so promptly," the lawyer said deferentially. "I suppose you understand what a large estate it is?"

"Two hun'r'd t'ousan', met'ink letter say."

"Yes; two—hundred—thousand," dwelling fondly on each word. "Here, suppose you take this chair while I explain the matter in deail."

Bat sat down diffidently, placing his hat upon the floor and the "feedle" across his knees; then, as the lawyer talked, his thoughts went straying out into the golden future, to the wonderful knowledge that was coming to him, and to little Pierre learning to play the "feedle" in the right way. Now and then a sentence of the lawyer drifted into his reverie, and suddenly he sprang to his feet with his eyes blazing.

"Wha' dat you say? Tell me 'g'in, quick!" he demanded.

"About the flaw in the will?" the lawyer said blandly. "Yes; that is what gives you the money. Lucky flaw, I say."

"Dat mean ol' man Tatro like money go to he Cousin Marie, on'y he make slip in de will. Me get him dat way, hey?"

"That's about it," dryly.

"Den you t'ink me t'ief?"

The lawyer looked surprised.

"Oh, come now," he urged hastily, "it's all right. The law says the money is yours. Everything is straight and above board."

Bat reached down and picked up his hat, which he placed squarely upon his head. Then he tucked the "feedle" under his arm.

"Who money 'long to?" he demanded so sharply that the lawyer moved back and placed a chair in front of him, "de law or ol' man Tatro? De law say gib him me; ol' man Tatro say gib him Marie. Huh!" and without stopping to parley further words Bat strode contemptuously into the street.

The sun was now behind the hills, and in place of its golden beckoning there was only dull universal shadow, pierced here and there by the electric lights of the city. In the woods the darkness was without break, but the trapper walked quietly into them and disappeared. Over yonder by the river was his cabin, with the dugout on the bank, and his traps and fishing poles, and the battered, muzzle-loading rifle. He would go back to them.





THE VISION OF SUDDEN DEATH

BY THOMAS DE QUINCEY

Famous Story Series.

WHAT is to be thought of sudden death? It is remarkable that, in different conditions of society, it has been variously regarded as the consummation of an earthly career most fervently to be desired, and on the other hand, as that consummation which is most of all to be deprecated. Cæsar the Dictator, at his last dinner party ("cæna"), and the very evening before his assassination, being questioned as to the mode of death which, in his opinion, might seem the most eligible, replied :

"That which should be most sudden."

On the other hand, the divine Litany of our English Church, when breathing forth supplications, as if in some representative character for the whole human race prostrate before God, places such a death in the very van of horrors. "From lightning and tempest ; from plague, pestilence, and famine ; from battle and murder, and from sudden death, good Lord, deliver us." Sudden death is here made to crown the climax in a grand ascent of calamities ; it is the last of curses, and yet, by the noblest of Romans, it was treated as the first of blessings. In that difference, most readers will see little more than the difference between Christianity and Paganism. But there I hesitate. The Christian Church may be right in its estimate of sudden death ; and it is a natural feeling, though after all it may also be an infirm one, to wish for a quiet dismissal from life—as that which seems most reconcilable with meditation, with penitential retrospects, and with the humilities of farewell prayer. There does not, however, occur to me any direct Scriptural warrant for this earnest petition of the English

litany. It seems rather a petition indulged to human infirmity, than exacted from human piety. And, however that may be, two remarks suggest themselves as prudent restraints upon a doctrine, which else may wander, and has wandered, into an uncharitable superstition. The first is this: that many people are likely to exaggerate the horror of a sudden death (I mean the objective horror to him who contemplates such a death, not the subjective horror to him who suffers it), from the false disposition to lay a stress upon words or acts, simply because by an accident they have become words or acts. If a man dies, for instance, by some sudden death when he happens to be intoxicated, such a death is falsely regarded with peculiar horror, as though the intoxication were suddenly exalted into a blasphemy. But that is unphilosophic. The man was, or he was not, habitually a drunkard. If not, if his intoxication were a solitary accident, there can be no reason at all for allowing special emphasis to this act, simply because through misfortune it became his final act. Nor, on the other hand, if it were no accident, but one of his habitual transgressions, will it be the more habitual or the more a transgression, because some sudden calamity, surprising him, has caused this habitual transgression to be also a final one? Could the man have had any reason even dimly to foresee his own sudden death, there would have been a new feature in his act of intemperance—a feature of presumption and irreverence, as in one that by possibility felt himself drawing near to the presence of God. But this is no part of the case supposed. And the only new element in the man's act is not any element of extra immorality, but simply of extra misfortune.

The other remark has reference to the meaning of the word sudden. And it is a strong illustration of the duty which forever calls us to the stern valuation of words, that very possibly Cæsar and the Christian Church do not differ in the way supposed; that is, do not differ by any difference of doctrine as between Pagan and Christian views of the moral temper appropriate to death, but that they are contemplating different cases. Both contemplate a different death, a "Biathanatos"—death that is "Biaios"; but the difference is that the Roman by the word "sudden" means an unlingering death; whereas the Christian Litany by "sudden" means a death without warning, consequently without any available summons to religious preparation. The poor mutineer, who kneels down to gather

into his heart the bullets from twelve firelocks of his pitying comrades, dies by a most sudden death in Cæsar's sense; one shock, one mighty spasm, one (possibly not one) groan, and all is over. But, in the sense of the Litany, his death is far from sudden; his offence, originally, his imprisonment, his trial, the interval between his sentence and its execution, having all furnished him with separate warnings of his fate—having all summoned him to meet it with solemn preparation.

Meantime, whatever may be thought of a sudden death as a mere variety in the modes of dying, where death in some shape is inevitable—a question which, equally in the Roman and the Christian sense, will be variously answered according to each man's variety of temperament—certainly, upon one aspect of sudden death there can be no opening for doubt, that of all agonies incident to man it is the most frightful, that of all martyrdoms it is the most freezing to human sensibilities—namely, where it surprises a man under circumstances which offer (or which seem to offer) some hurried and inappreciable chance of evading it. Any effort, by which such an evasion can be accomplished, must be as sudden as the danger which it affronts. Even that, even the sickening necessity for hurrying in extremity where all hurry seems destined to be vain, self-baffled, and where the dreadful knell of too late is already sounding in the ears by anticipation—even that anguish is liable to a hideous exasperation in one particular case, namely, where the agonizing appeal is made not exclusively to the instinct of self-preservation, but to the conscience on behalf of another life besides your own, accidentally cast upon your protection. To fail, to collapse in a service merely your own, might seem comparatively venial, though, in fact, it is far from venial. But to fail in a case where Providence has suddenly thrown into your hands the final interests of another, of a fellow-creature shuddering between the gates of life and death, this, to a man of apprehensive conscience, would mingle the misery of an atrocious criminality with the misery of a bloody calamity. The man is called upon, too, probably to die, but to die at the very moment when, by any momentary collapse, he is self-denounced as a murderer. He had but the twinkling of an eye for his effort, and that effort might, at the best, have been unavailing; but from this shadow of a chance, small or great, how if he has recoiled by a treasonable "*lâcheté*? The effort might have been without hope; but to have risen to the level of that

effort would have rescued him, though not from dying, yet from dying as a traitor to his duties.

The situation here contemplated exposes a dreadful ulcer lurking far down in the depths of human nature. It is not that men generally are summoned to face such awful trials. But potentially, and in shadowy outline, such a trial is moving subterraneously in perhaps all men's natures, muttering under ground in one world, to be realized perhaps in some other. Upon the secret mirror of our dreams such a trial is darkly projected at intervals, perhaps, to every one of us. That dream, so familiar to childhood, of meeting a lion, and, from languishing prostration in hope and vital energy, that constant sequel of lying down before him, publishes the secret frailty of human nature, reveals its deep-seated Pariah falsehood to itself—records its abysmal treachery. Perhaps not one of us escapes that dream; perhaps, as by some sorrowful doom of man, that dream repeats for every one of us, through every generation, the original temptation in Eden. Every one of us, in this dream, has a bait offered to the infirm places of his own individual will; once again a snare is made ready for leading him into captivity to a luxury of ruin; again, as in aboriginal Paradise, the man falls from innocence. Once again, by infinite iteration, the ancient earth groans to God, through her secret caves, over the weakness of her child: "Nature, from her seat, sighing through all her works," again "gives signs of woe that all is lost;" and again the countersign is repeated to the sorrowing heavens of the endless rebellion against God. Many people think that one man, the patriarch of our race, could not in his single person execute this rebellion for all his race. Perhaps they are wrong. But, even if not, perhaps in the world of dreams every one of us ratifies for himself the original act. Our English rite of Confirmation, by which, in years of awakened reason, we take upon us the engagements contracted for us in our slumbering infancy—how sublime a rite is that! The little postern gate, through which the baby in its cradle had been silently placed for a time within the glory of God's countenance, suddenly rises to the clouds as a triumphal arch, through which, with banners displayed and martial pomps, we make our second entry as crusading soldiers militant for God, by personal choice and by sacramental oath. Each man says in effect, "Lo! I rebaptize myself; and that which once was sworn on my behalf, now I swear for myself."

Even so in dreams, perhaps, under some secret conflict of the midnight sleeper, lighted up to the consciousness at the time, but darkened to the memory as soon as all is finished, each several child of our mysterious race completes for himself the aboriginal fall.

As I drew near to the Manchester post-office I found that it was considerably past midnight; but, to my great relief, as it was important for me to be in Westmoreland by the morning, I saw by the huge saucer eyes of the mail, blazing through the gloom of overhanging houses, that my chance was not yet lost. Past the time it was; but by some luck, very unusual in my experience, the mail was not even yet ready to start. I ascended to my seat on the box, where my cloak was still lying, as it had lain at the Bridgewater Arms. I had left it there in imitation of a nautical discoverer, who leaves a bit of bunting on the shore of his discovery, by way of warning off the ground the whole human race, and signaling to the Christian and the heathen worlds, with his best compliments, that he has planted his throne forever upon that virgin soil, henceforward claiming the "*jus dominii*" to the top of the atmosphere above it, and also the right of driving shafts to the centre of the earth below it; so that all people found after this warning, either aloft in the atmosphere, or in the shafts, or squatting on the soil, will be treated as trespassers—that is, decapitated by their very faithful and obedient servant, the owner of the said bunting. Possibly my cloak might not have been respected, and the "*jus gentium*" might have been cruelly violated in my person, for in the dark people commit deeds of darkness, gas being a great ally of morality; but it so happened that, on this night, there was no other outside passenger; and the crime, which else was but too probable, missed fire for want of a criminal. By the way, I may as well mention at this point, since a circumstantial accuracy is essential to the effect of my narrative, that there was no other person of any description whatever about the mail—the guard, the coachman, and myself being allowed for, except only one, a horrid creature of the class known to the world as insiders, but whom young Oxford called sometimes "*Trojans*," in opposition to our Grecian selves, and sometimes "*vermin*." A Turkish Effendi, who piques himself on good-breeding, will never mention by name a pig. Yet it is but too often that he has reason to mention this animal; since constantly in the streets of Stamboul, he has

his trousers deranged or polluted by this vile creature running between his legs. But under any excess of hurry he is always careful, out of respect to the company he is dining with, to suppress the odious name, and to call the wretch "that other creature," as though all animal life beside formed one group, and this odious beast (to whom, as Chrysippus observed, salt serves as an apology for a soul) formed another and alien group on the outside of creation. Now I, who am an English Effendi, that think myself to understand good-breeding as well as any son of Othman, beg my reader's pardon for having mentioned an insider by his gross natural name. I shall do so no more, and if I should have occasion to glance at so painful a subject, I shall always call him "that other creature." Let us hope, however, that no such distressing occasion will arise. But, by the way, an occasion arises at this moment, for the reader will be sure to ask, when we come to the story, "Was this other creature present?" He was not, or more correctly, perhaps, it was not. We dropped the creature—or the creature by natural imbecility dropped itself—within the first ten miles from Manchester. In the latter case, I wish to make a philosophic remark of a moral tendency. When I die, or when the reader dies, and by repute suppose of fever, it will never be known whether we died in reality of the fever or of the doctor. But this other creature, in the case of dropping out of the coach, will enjoy a coroner's inquest, consequently he will enjoy an epitaph. For I insist upon it, that the verdict of a coroner's jury makes the best of epitaphs. It is brief, so that the public all find time to read; it is pithy, so that the surviving friends (if any can survive such a loss) remember it without fatigue; it is upon oath, so that rascals and Dr. Johnsons cannot pick holes in it. "Died through the visitation of intense stupidity, by impinging on a moonlight night against the off-hind wheel of the Glasgow mail! Deodand upon the said wheel—twopence." What a simple lapidary inscription! Nobody much in the wrong, but an off-wheel, and with few acquaintances; and if it were but rendered into choice Latin, though there would be a little bother in finding a Ciceronian word for "off-wheel," Marcellus himself, that great master of sepulchral eloquence, could not show a better. Why I call this little remark moral is from the compensation it points out. Here, by the supposition, is that other creature on the one side, the beast of the world, and he (or it) gets an epi-

taph. You and I, on the contrary, the pride of our friends, get none.

But why linger on the subject of vermin? Having mounted the box I took a small quantity of laudanum, having already traveled two hundred and fifty miles—namely, from a point seventy miles beyond London, upon a simple breakfast. In the taking of laudanum there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident it drew upon me the special attention of my assessor on the box, the coachman. And in that there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident, and with great delight, it drew my attention to the fact that this coachman was a monster in point of size, and that he had but one eye; in fact, he had been foretold by Virgil as

“*Monstrum, horrendum, informe, ingens cui lumen ademptum.*”

He answered in every point—a monster he was—dreadful, shapeless, huge, who had lost an eye. But why should that delight me? Had he been one of the Calendars in the Arabian Nights, and had paid down his eye as the price of his criminal curiosity, what right had I to exult in his misfortune? I did not exult; I delighted in no man's punishment, though it were even merited. But these personal distinctions identified in an instant an old friend of mine, whom I had known in the South for some years as the most masterly of mail-coachmen. He was the man in all Europe that could best have undertaken to drive six-in-hand full gallop over “*Al Sirat*,” that famous bridge of Mahomet across the bottomless gulf, backing himself against the Prophet and twenty such fellows. I used to call him “*Cyclops mastigophorus*,” Cyclops the whip-bearer, until I observed that his skill made whips useless, except to fetch off an impertinent fly from a leader's head; upon which I changed his Grecian name to Cyclops “*diphrelates*” (Cyclops the charioteer). I, and others known to me, studied under him the diphrelatic art. Excuse, reader, a word too elegant to be pedantic. And also take this remark from me, as a “*gage d'amitié*,” that no word ever was or can be pedantic which, by supporting a distinction, supports the accuracy of logic, or which fills up a chasm for the understanding. As a pupil, though I paid extra fees, I cannot say that I stood high in his esteem. It showed his dogged honesty (though, observe, not his discernment), that he could not see my merits. Perhaps we ought to excuse his absurdity in this particular by

remembering his want of an eye. That made him blind to my merits. Irritating as this blindness was (surely it could not be envy!), he always courted my conversation, in which art I certainly had the whip-hand of him. On this occasion great joy was at our meeting. But what was Cyclops doing here? Had the medical men recommended northern air, or how? I collected, from such explanations as he volunteered, that he had an interest at stake in a suit-at-law pending at Lancaster; so that probably he had got himself transferred to this station, for the purpose of connecting with his professional pursuits an instant readiness for the calls of his lawsuit.

Meantime, what are we stopping for? Surely, we've been waiting long enough. Oh, this procrastinating mail, and Oh, this procrastinating post-office! Can't they take a lesson upon that subject from me? Some people have called me procrastinating. Now, you are witness, reader, that I was in time for them. But can they lay their hands on their hearts, and say that they were in time for me? I, during my life, have often had to wait for the post-office; the post-office never waited a minute for me. What are they about? The guard tells me that there is a large extra accumulation of foreign mails this night, owing to irregularities caused by war and by the packet service, when as yet nothing is done by steam. For an extra hour, it seems, the post-office has been engaged in threshing out the pure wheaten correspondence of Glasgow, and winnowing it from the chaff of all baser intermediate towns. We can hear the flails going at this moment. But at last all is finished. Sound your horn, guard! Manchester, good-bye! we've lost an hour by your criminal conduct at the post-office, which, however, though I do not mean to part with a serviceable ground of complaint, and one which really is such for the horses, to me secretly is an advantage, since it compels us to recover this last hour among the next eight or nine. Off we are at last, and at eleven miles an hour; and at first I detect no changes in the energy or in the skill of Cyclops.

From Manchester to Kendal, which virtually (though not in law) is the capital of Westmoreland, were at this time seven stages of eleven miles each. The first five of these, dated from Manchester, terminated in Lancaster, which was therefore fifty-five miles north of Manchester, and the same distance exactly from Liverpool. The first three terminated in Preston (called, by way of distinction from other towns of that name,

proud Preston), at which place it was that the separate roads from Liverpool and from Manchester to the north became confluent. Within these first three stages lay the foundation, the progress, and termination of our night's adventure. During the first stage I found out that Cyclops was mortal; he was liable to the shocking affection of sleep—a thing which I had never previously suspected. If a man is addicted to the vicious habit of sleeping, all the skill in aurigation of Apollo himself, with the horses of Aurora to execute the motions of his will, avail him nothing. "Oh, Cyclops!" I exclaimed more than once; "Cyclops, my friend, thou art mortal. Thou snoorest." Through this first eleven miles, however, he betrayed his infirmity, which I grieve to say he shared with the whole Pagan Pantheon, only by short stretches. On waking up, he made an apology for himself, which, instead of mending the matter laid an ominous foundation for coming disasters. The summer assizes were now proceeding at Lancaster, in consequence of which, for three nights and three days, he had not lain down in a bed. During the day he was waiting for his uncertain summons as a witness on the trial in which he was interested, or he was drinking with the other witnesses, under the vigilant surveillance of the attorneys. During the night, or that part of it when the least temptations existed to conviviality, he was driving. Throughout the second stage he grew more and more drowsy. In the second mile of the third stage, he surrendered himself finally and without a struggle to his perilous temptation. All his past resistance had but deepened the weight of this final oppression. Seven atmospheres of sleep seemed resting upon him, and to consummate the case, our worthy guard, after singing *Love Amongst the Roses* for the fiftieth or sixtieth time, without any invitation from Cyclops or me, and without applause for his poor labors, had moodily resigned himself to slumber, not so deep doubtless as the coachman's, but deep enough for mischief, and having probably no similar excuse. And thus at last about ten miles from Preston I found myself left in charge of his majesty's London and Glasgow mail, then running about eleven miles an hour.

What made this negligence less criminal than else it must have been thought, was the condition of the roads at night during the assizes. At that time all the law business of populous Liverpool, and of populous Manchester, with its vast cincture

of populous rural districts, was called up by ancient usage to the tribunal of Lilliputian Lancaster. To break up this old traditional usage required a conflict with powerful established interests, a large system of new arrangements, and a new parliamentary statute. As things were at present, twice in the year so vast a body of business rolled northwards, from the southern quarter of the county, that a fortnight at least occupied the severe exertions of two judges for its dispatch. The consequence of this was that every horse available for such a service, along the whole line of road, was exhausted in carrying down the multitudes of people who were parties to the different suits. By sunset, therefore, it usually happened that, through utter exhaustion amongst men and horses, the roads were all silent. Except exhaustion in the vast adjacent county of York from a contested election, nothing like it was ordinarily witnessed in England.

On this occasion the usual silence and solitude prevailed along the road. Not a hoof nor a wheel was to be heard. And to strengthen this false luxurious confidence in the noiseless roads, it happened also that the night was one of peculiar solemnity and peace. I myself, though slightly alive to the possibilities of peril, had so far yielded to the influence of the mighty calm as to sink into a profound reverie. The month was August, in which lay my own birthday, a festival to every thoughtful man suggesting solemn and often sigh-born thoughts. The county was my own native county, upon which, in its southern section, more than upon any equal area known to man past or present, had descended the original curse of labor in its heaviest form, not mastering the bodies of men only as slaves, or criminals in mines, but working through the fiery will. Upon no equal space of earth was, or ever had been, the same energy of human power put forth daily. At this particular season also of the assizes, that dreadful hurricane of flight and pursuit, as it might have seemed to a stranger that swept to and from Lancaster all day long, hunting the county up and down, and regularly subsiding about sunset, uniting with the permanent distinction of Lancashire as the very metropolis and citadel of labor, to point the thoughts pathetically upon that counter-vision of rest, of saintly repose from strife and sorrow, toward which, as to their secret haven, the profounder aspirations of man's heart are continually traveling. Obliquely we were nearing the sea upon our left,

which also must, under the present circumstances, be repeating the general state of halcyon repose. The sea, the atmosphere, the light, bore an orchestral part in this universe lull. Moonlight and the first timid tremblings of the dawn were now blending, and the blendings were brought into a still more exquisite state of unity by a slight silvery mist, motionless and dreamy, that covered the woods and fields, but with a veil of equable transparency. Except the feet of our own horses, which, running on a sandy margin of the road, made little disturbance, there was no sound abroad. In the clouds and on the earth prevailed the same majestic peace; and in spite of all that the villain of a schoolmaster has done for the ruin of our sublimer thoughts, which are the thoughts of our infancy, we still believe in no such nonsense as a limited atmosphere. Whatever we may swear with our false feigning lips, in our faithful hearts we still believe, and must forever believe, in fields of air traversing the total gulf between earth and the central heavens. Still, in the confidence of children that tread without any fear every chamber in their father's house, and to whom no door is closed, we, in that Sabbath vision which sometimes is revealed for an hour upon nights like this, ascend with easy steps from the sorrow-stricken fields of earth upward to the sandals of God.

Suddenly from thoughts like these I was awakened to a sullen sound, as of some motion on the distant road. It stole upon the air for a moment; I listened in awe, but then it died away. Once aroused, however, I could not but observe with alarm the quickened motion of our horses. Ten years' experience had made my eye learned in the valuing of motion, and I saw that we were now running thirteen miles an hour. I pretend to no presence of mind. On the contrary, my fear is that I am miserably and shamefully deficient in that quality as regards action. The palsy of doubt and distraction hangs like some guilty weight of dark, unfathomed remembrances upon my energies, when the signal is flying for action. But, on the other hand, this accursed gift I have, as regards thought, that in the first step toward the possibility of a misfortune, I see its total evolution; in the radix I see too certainly and too instantly its entire expansion; in the first syllable of the dreadful sentence, I read already the last. It was not that I feared for ourselves. What could injure us? Our bulk and impetus charmed us against peril in any collision. And I had rode

through too many hundreds of perils that were frightful to approach, that were matter of laughter as we looked back upon them, for any anxiety to rest upon our interests. The mail was not built, I felt assured, nor bespoke, that could betray me who trusted to its protection. But any carriage that we could meet would be frail and light in comparison of ourselves. And I remarked this ominous accident of our situation. We were on the wrong side of the road. But, then, the other party, if other there was, might also be on the wrong side; and two wrongs might make a right. That was not likely. The same motive which had drawn us to the right-hand side of the road, namely, the soft, beaten sand, as contrasted with the paved centre, would prove attractive to others. Our lamps, still lighted, would give the impression of vigilance on our part. And every creature that met us would rely upon us for quartering. All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a thousand times more, I saw, not discursively or by effort, but as by one flash of horrid intuition.

Under this steady though rapid anticipation of the evil which might be gathering ahead, ah, reader! what a sullen mystery of fear, what a sigh of woe, seemed to steal upon the air, as again the far-off sound of a wheel was heard! A whisper it was—a whisper from, perhaps, four miles off—secretly announcing a ruin that, being foreseen, was not the less inevitable. What could be done? Who was it that could do it—to check the storm-flight of these maniacal horses? What! could I not seize the reins from the grasp of the slumbering coachman? You, reader, think that it would have been in your power to do so. And I quarrel not with your estimate of yourself. But, from the way in which the coachman's hand was vised between his upper and lower thigh, this was impossible. The guard subsequently found it impossible, after this danger had passed. Not the grasp only, but also the position of this Polyphemus, made the attempt impossible. You still think otherwise. See, then, that bronze equestrian statue. The cruel rider has kept the bit in his horse's mouth for two centuries. Unbridle him, for a minute, if you please, and wash his mouth with water. Or, stay, reader, unhorse me that marble emperor; knock me those marble feet from those marble stirrups of Charlemagne.

The sounds ahead strengthened, and were now too clearly the sound of wheels. Who and what could it be? Was it in-

dustry in a taxed cart? Was it youthful gayety in a gig? Whoever it was, something must be attempted to warn them. Upon the other party rests the active responsibility, but upon us—and, woe is me! that *us* was my single self—rests the responsibility of warning. Yet, how should this be accomplished? Might I not seize the guard's horn? Already, on the first thought, I was making my way over the roof to the guard's seat. But this, from the foreign mail's being piled upon the roof, was a difficult and even dangerous attempt, to one cramped by nearly three hundred miles of outside traveling. And, fortunately, before I had lost much time in the attempt, our frantic horses swept round an angle of the road, which opened upon us the stage where the collision must be accomplished, the parties that seemed summoned to the trial, and the impossibility of saving them by any communication with the guard.

Before us lay an avenue, straight as an arrow, six hundred yards, perhaps, in length; and the umbrageous trees, which rose in a regular line from either side, meeting high overhead, gave to it the character of a cathedral aisle. These trees lent a deeper solemnity to the early light; but there was still light enough to perceive, at the farther end of this Gothic aisle, a light, reedy gig, in which were seated a young man, and by his side a young lady. Ah, young sir, what are you about? If it is necessary that you should whisper your communications to this young lady, though really I see nobody at this hour, and on this solitary road, likely to overhear your conversation, is it therefore necessary that you should carry your lips forward to hers? The little carriage is creeping on at one mile an hour, and the parties within it being thus tenderly engaged, are naturally bending down their heads. Between them and eternity, to all human calculation, there is but a minute and a half. What is it that I shall do? Strange it is, and to a mere auditor of the tale, might seem laughable, that I should need a suggestion from the *Iliad* to prompt the sole recourse that remained. But so it was. Suddenly I remembered the shout of Achilles, and its effect. But could I pretend to shout like the son of Peleus, aided by Pallas? No, certainly; but then I needed not the shout that should alarm all Asia militant—a shout would suffice, such as should carry terror into the hearts of thoughtless young people, and one gig horse. I shouted—and the young man heard me not. A second time

I shouted—and now he heard me, for he raised his head.

Here, then, all had been done that by me could be done; more on my part was not possible. Mine had been the first step, the second was for the young man, the third was for God. If, said I, the stranger is a brave man, and if, indeed, he loves the young girl at his side, or loving her not, if he feels the obligation pressing upon every man worthy to be called a man, of doing his utmost for a woman confided to his protection, he will at least make some effort to save her. If that fails, he will not perish the more, or by a death more cruel, for having made it, and he will die as a brave man should, with his face to the danger, and with his arm about the woman that he sought in vain to save. But if he makes no effort, shrinking without a struggle, from his duty, he himself will not the less certainly perish for this baseness of poltroonery. He will die no less, and why not? Wherefore should we grieve that there is one craven less in the world? No; let him perish, without a pitying thought of ours wasted upon him; and, in that case, all our grief will be reserved for the fate of the helpless girl, who now, upon the least shadow of failure in him, must, by the fiercest of translations, must, without time for a prayer, must within seventy seconds stand before the judgment-seat of God.

But craven he was not. Sudden had been the call upon him, and sudden was his answer to the call. He saw, he heard, he comprehended, the ruin that was coming down. Already its gloomy shadow darkened above him, and already he was measuring his strength to deal with it. Ah! what a vulgar thing does courage seem, when we see nations buying it and selling it for a shilling a day. Ah! what a sublime thing does courage seem, when some fearful crisis on the great deeps of life carries a man, as if running before a hurricane, up to the giddy crest of some mountainous wave, from which, accordingly as he chooses his course, he describes two courses, and a voice says to him audibly, "This way lies hope; take the other way and mourn forever!" Yet, even then, amidst the raving of the seas and the frenzy of the danger, the man is able to confront his situation, is able to retire for a moment into solitude with God, and to seek all his counsel from him! For seven seconds, it might be, of his seventy, the stranger settled his countenance steadfastly upon us, as if to search and value every element in the conflict before him. For five seconds more he sat im-

movably, like one that mused on some great purpose. For five he sat with eyes upraised, like one that prayed in sorrow, under some extremity of doubt, for wisdom to guide him toward the better choice. Then suddenly he rose, stood upright, and, by a sudden strain upon the reins, raising his horse's forefeet from the ground, he slewed him round on the pivot of his hind legs, so as to plant the little equipage in a position nearly at right angles to ours. Thus far his condition was not improved, except as a first step had been taken toward the possibility of a second. If no more were done, nothing was done, for the little carriage still occupied the very centre of our path, though in an altered direction. Yet even now it may not be too late. Fifteen of the twenty seconds may still be unexhausted, and one almighty bound forward may avail to clear the ground. Hurry then, hurry! for the flying moments—they hurry! Oh, hurry, hurry, my brave young man! for the cruel hoofs of our horses—they also hurry! Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs of our horses. Fear not for him, if human energy can suffice; faithful was he that drove, to his terrific duty; faithful was the horse to his command. One blow, one impulse given with voice and hand by the stranger, one rush from the horse, one bound as if in the act of rising to a fence, landed the docile creature's forefeet upon the crown or arching centre of the road. The larger half of the little equipage had then cleared our over-towering shadow; that was evident even to my own agitated sight. But it mattered little that one wreck should float off in safety, if upon the wreck that perished were embarked the human freightage. The rear part of the carriage, was that certainly beyond the line of absolute ruin? What power could answer the question? Glance of eye, thought of man, wing of angel, which of these had speed enough to sweep between the question and the answer, and divide the one from the other? Light does not tread upon the steps of light more indivisibly, than did our all-conquering arrival upon the escaping efforts of the gig. That must the young man have felt too plainly. His back was now turned to us; not by sight could he any longer communicate with the peril, but by the dreadful rattle of our harness, too truly had his ear been instructed, that all was finished as regarded any further effort of his. Already in resignation he had rested from his struggle, and perhaps in his heart he was whispering, "Father, which art above, do thou finish in heaven what I on earth have attempted!" We ran past them faster than ever

mill-race in our inexorable flight. Oh, raving of hurricanes that must have sounded in their young ears at the moment of our transit! Either with the swingle-bar, or with the haunch of our near leader, we had struck the off-wheel of the little gig, which stood rather obliquely and not quite so far advanced as to be accurately parallel with the near wheel. The blow, from the fury of our passage, resounded terrifically. I rose in horror, to look upon the ruin we might have caused. From my elevated station I looked down, and looked back upon the scene, which in a moment told its tale, and wrote all its records on my heart forever.

The horse was planted immovably, with his forefeet upon the paved crest of the central road. He of the whole party was alone untouched by the passion of death. The little cany carriage—partly perhaps from the dreadful torsion of the wheels in its recent movement, partly from the thundering blow we had given to it—as if it sympathized with human horror, was all alive with tremblings and shiverings. The young man sat like a rock. He stirred not at all. But his was the steadiness of agitation frozen into rest by horror. As yet he dared not to look round, for he knew that if anything remained to do, by him it could no longer be done. And as yet he knew not for certain if their safety were accomplished. But the lady——

But the lady? Oh, heavens! will that spectacle ever depart from my dreams, as she rose and sank upon her seat, sank and rose, threw up her arms wildly to heaven, clutched at some visionary object in the air, fainting, praying, raving, despairing! Figure to yourself, reader, the elements of the case—suffer me to recall before your mind the circumstances of the unparalleled situation. From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night—from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight—from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love—suddenly, as from the woods and fields, suddenly as from the chambers of the air opening in revelation; suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death the crowned phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.

The moments were numbered. In the twinkling of an eye our flying horses had carried us to the termination of the umbrageous aisle; at right angles we wheeled into our former direction; the turn of the road carried the scene out of my eyes in an instant, and swept it into my dreams forever.

Anecdotes.

IN this department of short stories about people, compiled from various sources and contributed, an annual subscription to Short Stories will be given each month for the best original or selected anecdote sent in by any contributor. The Editor cannot undertake to return contributions or engage in correspondence over them. If the extract is valuable keep a copy of it. Communications should be marked "Anecdotes," care The Current Literature Publishing Co., Bryant Building, 55 Liberty St., New York, and should be signed with name or initials.

The Cash Prize Competition.

The award of prizes, so long unavoidably delayed in this competition, has been made, the names of the successful competitors being as follows, with the prize anecdotes given below:

T. M. Hill, 918 Lamar street, Fort Worth, Tex., first prize, \$15.00; G. H. Partridge, care Engineering Record, 100 William street, New York City, second prize, \$10.00; Florence Mellish, Killingly, Conn., third prize, \$5.00, and to each of the following, \$2.00: J. Chetwood, Jr., 212 Sansome street, San Francisco, Cal.; Thomas Spencer Cobb, care American Hotel, Petaluma, Cal.; B. Mac W. Thompson, 141 Bleury street, Montreal, P. Q., Canada; W. H. Mac Kay, 24 Van Reipen avenue, Jersey City, N. J.; Mary S. Saxe, 37 St. Luke street, Montreal, P. Q., Canada; Raymond E. Cook, 26 South 6th street, Philadelphia, Pa.; Mrs. Mary Bartlett Kellogg, Skaneateles, N. Y.; Mrs. Florence C. Drew, 92d street, near 3d avenue, Fort Hamilton, N. Y.; S. V. McClure, Fort Logan, Colo.; Rev. Claude Kelly, Temple Hall, Sandusky, Ohio.

A Financial Embarrassment.

A lady who had a kindly remembrance for all her domestic servants, met an erstwhile washerwoman and stopped to ask her how she fared.

"Oh, mem, it's turrible finanshul disthress me an' the childer's in!"

"Why, what is the matter—are you out of employment?"

"No, mem; work's in a fair state o' stiddiness, and not a cint do I owe, but it's lashin's o' throuble I've got!"

"Are you not paid promptly?"

"As prompt as the day cooms round."

"What is your financial distress, then?"

"Well, mem" (in a burst of horror) "what's killin' me is, I earn six dollars the week an' pay eight for me boord, an' only Gord knows how I do it!"

T. M. H.

Why He Quit.

A Swede, who was one of a gang of men employed in a large planing mill in a Northwestern town, went one day to the manager of the mill and remarked that he thought Johnson, the foreman, had quit.

"What!" said the manager, "Johnson quit? Why, man, he has been in our employ for twenty years."

"Well, I tank he quit," said the Swede.

"He has never complained," said the manager, "and besides he was the best paid man in the mill. Why should he quit? Has he a better job?"

"I tank he quit," repeated the Swede, doggedly. Then, motioning to the manager to follow him, he led the way to a place in the boom from which the logs had been removed. The water was clear and deep, and on the bottom of the river lay the body of Johnson, the foreman.

"There," said the Swede, triumphantly, pointing to the drowned form, "You tank Johnson he quit?"

G. H. P.

Mark Twain and the Baptist.

"Yes," said my friend, "I used to know Mark Twain. He was a frequent visitor at my uncle's during the two

years I lived in his family. The funniest thing I remember? Oh, Mark was always funny. On one occasion Uncle Willard invited him to join the family in an excursion down the river. It happened to be the same day and steamer that the Sunday school of the Central Baptist Church had selected for their annual picnic excursion. Now you must know that Mark Twain is just as much at home with the Baptists as I am. I have the impression he was brought up a Baptist as far as anybody could bring him up anything. But what must he do but make up to the superintendent and pretend that the Baptists were to him a mysterious sect and that he was devoured by curiosity concerning their tenets and customs. I could see the solemn, anxious countenance of Mark Twain and the puzzled, embarrassed face of the superintendent, but could not catch much of what they were saying. At last I edged near enough to hear Mark say in a hesitating, apologetic manner, 'Now I hope you won't think me inquisitive—but I have been told, and one can put so little confidence in mere rumor—I trust you won't consider my asking you a liberty—but—is it true—that you use water in some of your religious ceremonies?'

FLORENCE MELLISH.

A Saxe Anecdote.

When the late New England poet, John G. Saxe, was a young editor at Burlington, Vt., he attended a Roman Catholic funeral in the capacity of bearer. High mass was sung and the bearers stood throughout the long service. Finally a companion whispered to the humorist: "Pretty long drawn-out, isn't it, Saxe?"

"Yes," was the reply. "They will run in into the ground pretty soon."

MARY S. SAXE.

The Flesh Is Weak.

Many years ago the New Jersey cities, then mere towns or villages, were agi-

tated by the eloquence of a temperance orator. In his unregenerate days the orator in question had himself been over-addicted to the cheering cup. This fact, which was well known, of course, lent interest to his appearance and fervor to his words. One night at the close of a stirring address on temperance a heartless member of the audience sent to the platform of the tired and thirsty speaker what appeared to be an innocent glass of milk. In reality it was milk punch. The victim raised the glass to his lips, hesitated and was lost. Then, draining the glass to the last drop, he placed it on the table in front of him with the audible and emphatic remark, "Lord, what a cow!"

JAY SEE.

Jim's Latest.

Jim had a trouble. Every one at the Corners knew it from the fact that the old darkey who, on account of a shrewish wife, had always worn a henpecked expression, seemed more than ordinarily put upon. One afternoon, after much urging, he was prevailed upon to tell his latest woe.

"Well, boys," he said, "my tongue just dun slipped. You all know how I'se been troubled by my Liza eber sence I married dat gal—but what you don't know is dat she died las' week. Yessir," he repeated, as he noted the incredulous looks of several who had seen Jim's dusky helpmate but the day before, "she dun died las' week. I called in all de neighbors, 'cause I'se mighty glad she dun gone to glory, and we dug a hole in de graveyard, and den I boxed her up and druv her there as fast as I could—'cause I was terribul anxious to get de ole woman under cover. But when I arriv, lo and behol', de box was gone! I kinder remembered a rough spot in de road, so I turned back, feelin' mighty curus-like, and when I got to dat place, sure enough, dar was de box all bruk open—and Liza standin' up in de middle of de road! Well, I was nigh plum crazy; so I walked up and threw my arms around

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her and said: 'Foh God, honey, ef I'd a knowed dis yere were gwine to happen, I'd a driv moh careful.'

And, overcome by his weight of woe, the old man shuffled off.

S. V. McCLURE.

Making It Worth While.

An Irishman walking over a plank sidewalk, in counting some money accidentally dropped a nickel, which rolled down a crack between two of the boards. The Irishman was much put out by his loss, trifling though it was, and continued on his way swearing audibly.

Early the next day a friend, while walking by the spot, discovered the Irishman in the act of deliberately dropping a dollar down the same crack through which he had lost his nickel. The friend was of course much astonished at what he saw, and, desiring to learn why Pat should deliberately, to all appearances, throw away money, inquired his reasons, and was fairly taken off his feet by the following lucid (?) explanation:

"It was this way," said Pat. "It's yesterday I was passin' this way when I lost a nickel down that hole. Now I reasoned thot it wasn't worth me while to pull up thot sidewalk for a nickel, but last night a scheme struck me, and I'm dropping down the dollar to make it worth me while."

T. S. C.

A Sharp Answer.

A well-known bishop was making his annual round among the Sunday schools of his diocese, examining the children and encouraging them.

One Sunday, after having spoken on the lesson, whose subject was "Jacob's Dream," he said, "Now, is there any question you would like to ask me?"

For a moment there was silence, then a small girl on the front bench, spoke forth, in a timid voice, "Please, my lord, if the angels had wings, why would they need a ladder?"

This question was so unexpected that the poor bishop did not know what to reply, and was racking his brains for an answer, when the eager voice of a farmer's little daughter cried out, "Please, my lord, I know."

"Why was it, my dear?" asked the relieved bishop.

"Because they were moulting."

B. M. T.

Artemus Ward's Wit.

When the late Charles Farrar Browne, known to the literary world as Artemus Ward, was at the zenith of his popularity as a lecturer, a certain theatrical manager residing in the State of California, was desirous of engaging him for a series of lectures in San Francisco.

He accordingly wired Mr. Browne as follows:

"What will you take for forty nights in San Francisco?"

"Brandy and water," replied Mr. Browne, with characteristic humor.

RAYMOND E. COOK.

Sympathetic Query.

Little Charlie, grandson of the late Admiral P——, displeased his mother, who reproved him rather severely; the child evidently thinking punishment was imminent, ran out of the house, his mother after him. He took refuge under the piazza, deaf to all her calls.

Later his father returned, and, hearing the facts in the case, said, "I will bring him out," and suiting the action to the word, crawled under the piazza, when the little culprit exclaimed:

"Is she after you, too?"

MRS. MARY BARTLETT KELLOGG.

Eligible.

A class of girls about ten years of age each, whose teacher was fond of forming clubs, tried to form one of members who could trace their ancestry three generations or more, and offered a prize to the girl whose family went back the



HIS MYSTERIOUS CORRESPONDENT*

BY PARMA GENTRY.



MARSHFIELD," said the junior partner of the great firm of Vaughn, Cleveland & Vaughn, "I want you to do me a favor."

He was sitting on a corner of his desk, hands in pockets and swinging one foot—rather impatiently, his secretary thought.

"Well, I shall be pleased to; what is it?"

"Have you read any of those letters signed Nevada in the Metropolitan?"

"Nevada?" Miss Marshfield considered for a moment, then replied:

"Yes, I have; why do you ask?"

* Written for Short Stories. Illustrations by Florence England Nosworthy.

"Well, you have excellent taste in literature; don't you consider them remarkable?"

"Why, I don't know that I do; though they are fairly good, I believe."

"Ah, you are penurious with adjectives, I recollect. Now, I think they are far above the average, and I should like to discover the identity of this Nevada—she interests me intensely."

"You think Nevada is a woman, then?"

"Why, yes, I should judge so; shouldn't you?"

"I haven't given the subject much thought."

"Oh, I'm reasonably sure it's a woman, and what I want of you is to discover her for me."

Miss Marshfield looked her astonishment and asked:

"Why not try it yourself?"

"I have tried, and failed ignominiously. The unspeakableness of the sphinx is garrulity beside the silence those publishers have chosen to wrap about Nevada."

"But the silence is probably according to the instructions of Nevada herself, so how can I hope to break it?"

"Why, that's what I can't exactly see; I thought perhaps your woman's wit would suggest a way. You seem to be on a friendly footing with literary people—you might get some information from that source."

"You are wrong about my footing with literary people. I know very few, and am afraid I cannot be of the least use to you in this matter."

"What a wet blanket you can be on occasion! Miss Marshfield, I insist on being shown the respect due the tail of this firm—won't you please turn round again for a moment?"

"There's a large grist of letters to-day," she reminded him, turning partially about.

"Yes, yes, I daresay, there generally is; but, Marshfield, I'm not joking about this thing. I want to know the author of those letters—man or woman."

"The question of sex does not influence your desire for acquaintance, then?" The secretary's penetrating gaze was fixed on her typewriter, and she asked the question with apparent carelessness.

"Not at all; though, as I told you, I feel reasonably sure it is a woman."

"But granting that, you cannot feel reasonably sure she is a

person you would wish to know. She may be a nobody notwithstanding those articles."

"Not likely, I should say. Such talents as hers don't go a-begging. You know there is no caste in genius."

"No? I am glad to hear that."

"You speak as though you had been doubtful on the subject."

"Not in my own mind; but I didn't know what might be your opinion."

"I see that you are not inclined to be enthusiastic with me over this new writer. The simple truth is that he or she, whichever it may be, has cast a spell upon me. I never saw such imagery—such magic with words."

For a member of a firm dealing in machinery and requiring a practical knowledge of business, Russell Vaughn was about as unpractical a man as could have been found; that is to say, he would have been if he had given his imagination free rein and followed after the things which most allured him. But the mind of Vaughn, the elder, was fervently set on seeing his favorite son in his own place at the head of the firm, and Russell was pre-eminently a dutiful son. He had sat at the desk on which he now reclined for ten years, and the constant effort to discipline his faculties down to the basis of machinery had worn indelible little grooves between his eyebrows.



He had been a deep student—was still a deep student, so far as his duties would permit. The powers alone know in what firmament he might have shone had he not sprung from a commercial race, with whom precedent was immutable law. His grandfather had dealt in machinery, likewise his father, so he, too, dealt in machinery, though under silent protest.

Previous to being taken into the firm he had spent several years in foreign travel, and these had been the happiest years of his life. He had recorded their experiences in a small volume, written in whimsical style, which publishers seemed to find "not available," for after two or three trials of them he had concluded to "climb up some other way," as he laughingly expressed it to his secretary. The book was brought out at his own expense, and though it had not become famous,

had received many favorable press notices and been warmly welcomed by people not too much sated with travel to look at it through his fanciful eyes.

Miss Marshfield had read it and given it an honored place in her library. She had spoken warmly of many things it contained as agreeing with impressions of her own formed amid the same scenes, and this served to strengthen the friendship which had grown up between them during the three years in which she had been with the firm—a friendship platonic to all appearances.

Of the two, the stenographer had the greater adaptability. In the three years she had mastered the details of their immense trade, and her keen insight and quick memory were relied on by all three partners.

"Talk about a woman being illogical," said the elder Vaughn; "that young woman in the office is worth a dozen rattle-pated dudes," and in proof of his appreciation her surroundings were comfortable to a degree bordering on luxury.

"Such magic with words," echoed Miss Marshfield, thoughtfully. "Have you considered that there is apt to be a wide breach between the personality of an author and his writings?"

"No, I hadn't thought of it—not particularly."

"I could point you to many notable examples."

"Oh, yes, I daresay there are examples, but you must admit that in a world the size of this there are examples of almost everything."

"I did not mean to imply a rule, of course, but I think genius is often like a bright-winged spirit confined in a house of very common clay. Your Nevada might prove a disappointment if you succeeded in finding her. Better be content with the articles and not seek to know the author. You might otherwise be poorer by the loss of an illusion."

She looked at him with a laugh in her eyes, and resolutely struck the keys of her typewriter.

"You mustn't bother me any more," she asserted, "I am behind with my work as it is."

"I ask for assistance and you give me axioms," he retorted. "Nevertheless, I am not discouraged. Your opinions are usually worth looking into, but this is too gauzy."

"Go on," she said, over her shoulder; "never mind my

opinions, but when you find yourself disenchanted don't forget that I warned you."

This ended the discussion for that day, and during many following days Vaughn never mentioned Nevada. Then one morning he came into the office looking unusually cheerful, threw off his coat and began tossing about the mail on his desk in an absent-minded fashion. His secretary said nothing, rightly opining that he would soon disclose the cause of his satisfaction. Presently he paused in the act of opening a letter, and said:

"I feel greatly elated this morning; can you guess why?"

"I am not good at guessing."

"Well, then, I shall have to tell you. I've found Nevada—or rather I've been able to communicate with her through her publishers, and the result is that she has consented to correspond with me as the boys trade jack-knives, out o' sight 'n unseen."

"Indeed! How did you manage it?"

"By means of my prestige as the author of 'From Sea to Sea,' which is the first intimation I ever received that I had any such prestige. I played the card in desperation and it won. Quite romantic, don't you think?"

"Well, rather, if Nevada is a woman. Have you ascertained that?"

"No, I don't know yet, but I shall soon learn. It won't be possible to keep me mystified long. But all thought of that aside, I am promising myself untold pleasure from this correspondence. An interchange of ideas with a writer so versatile as Nevada is one of the keenest pleasures in life."

"I don't know anything about that, never having had a regular correspondent."

"Hm!" Vaughn went on with his work after this careless comment. He was not more than ordinarily selfish, but it never occurred to him that his secretary might possibly have a personal feeling with regard to this correspondent. If she had, however, it would not have been suspected from her manner.

Some days after this conversation he pulled a letter out of his pocket, and handing it over to her, said:



"Now, tell me what you think about Nevada being a woman."

Miss Marshfield tok the letter, smoothed it with her long, slender fingers, and asked:

"Do you think this perfectly fair?"

"Certainly—why not? It would be a sin to keep such a letter as that to myself."

After reading it she laid it on the table before her and seemed to be pondering.

"Why did you adopt the pseudonym of Darwin?" she asked, presently.

"Oh, for no reason only that it was the first that occurred to me. You see, I was to use one and not seek to penetrate hers."

"Hers! You are sure it is a woman, then, at last?"

"Can you doubt it after reading that letter? I think

she is certainly a woman, and a young one at that."

"Oh," said the secretary, drily, "and beautiful, too, no doubt. You seem to have gathered a large amount of information from this letter, while I see absolutely nothing in it which betrays either age or gender. In this day of vigorous writing it is impossible to tell who is behind an article—whether man or woman, but if I were to judge by one or two expressions here, I should say that the writer ought to be a big-bearded man."

"Oh, Marshfield, positively you are the last person I should have accused of jealousy."

For a year this romantic correspondence went on, growing constantly more absorbing to Russell Vaughn, and it appeared from the frequency of her letters, the same to Nevada.

On the days when Vaughn received one of these letters he was absent-minded to a marked degree, and the burden of responsibility for that day rested on the stenographer, but she



uttered no complaint, merely reminding him occasionally of neglected duties.

Sometimes he would spring suddenly to his feet in an abstracted mood and pace the office floor; sometimes stand before a window and gaze long out over the adjoining vacant lots where were piled a few pieces of old machinery. His secretary watched him narrowly at these times, and one day when she had called his attention to something which needed it, he turned abruptly and said:

"Marshfield, there's no doubt about your being a treasure. You are the one who should be junior partner here. Upon my word, I'm good for nothing." Then the slight, black-gowned figure had turned toward him.

"Let me advise you," she said. "I think you had better give up this correspondence of yours; it is doing you no good. Better drop it and forget it, and attend to business."

"Drop it! You don't know what you are saying. Have you any idea what part this friendship has come to play in my daily life? Now don't, please, set me down for a drivelling idiot. I am not going about with my heart on my sleeve telling every one what Nevada is to me, but there's something about you which invites my confidence notwithstanding that your criticisms have been rather acrid. I would give ten years of my life for the privilege of seeing Nevada's face — of hearing her talk as she writes. Why, did I show you her letters on Egyptology? I thought I knew a few things, but she makes me blush for my ignorance. Egypt! The very name is a mine of mystic delights under her facile pen. Scoff at me if you will.

Marshfield—you with your cool wit and calm judgment of men, but I would willingly exchange my best prospects in machinery for a voyage down the Nile with Nevada as a companion.

Miss Marshfield was rather paler than usual, but she only said quietly:

"And she eludes you persistently."

"Yes; and I can't see why. I have done my best. I have



brought all the power there is in words to the siege, and unfortunately words are my only available weapons. She promises an interview sometime in the future, but continually puts me off. She has seen me, too, which doesn't seem all round fair." Miss Marshfield looked at him with mirth in her eyes.

"What now?" he exclaimed in a vexed tone. "Look here, Marshfield, you're getting altogether too much fun out of me. I see my garrulity needs muzzling. It don't seem like you, though; I thought you'd have some sympathy."

"And so I have, but I can't help contemplating the possibility of your correspondent being some leathery old woman whose romance is all in the past, and who is amusing herself by warming it over the flame of your young passion. Of course she couldn't show herself, because that would mean—curtain."

"You are talking most unheard-of nonsense, for you. No leathery old woman would write with such fire and eloquence. She is young and enthusiastic. You have not seen all her letters."

"No? I think you might have shown them to me." She looked hard at him as she spoke, and he actually blushed under her scrutiny.

"Ah, I see," she went on, mercilessly; "Nevada has been making love to you."

He neither acknowledged nor denied, but turned abruptly away, for the first time in their acquaintance angry with her.

"Supposing," she went on, as if she had not noticed, "that you meet your Nevada and find her, though attractive to the eye, unlovely in character, would her genius obliterate the effect——"

"Utterly impossible for a person who writes like that to be spiritually unlovely."

"There you are in error. Neither bad nor good qualities are absolute in real people. Nature has its moods and tenses, and I have been told that writers as a class are especially susceptible to them—in fact, that it's a very good rule to know your pet author at a respectful distance."

"Well," said Vaughn, trying to throw off his sullenness, "you may be perfectly right—I daresay you are, but all this is too complex for me. I am not an adept in analyzing charac-

ter, and to tell the truth, don't think I care to be. Not, however, that I mean to disparage the habit. Probably it is a very good one, only not congenial to my tastes."

"No," said Miss Marshfield, thoughtfully, "it is not congenial to your tastes. You care so much more for ideals than for actualities."

Vaughn had been standing with his back toward her, looking out of the window. Suddenly he wheeled about and stood beside her desk.

"Marshfield, I should like to know why you couldn't have been Nevada."

"Why do you say that?" she ejaculated in surprise.

"Because a passion for you would be the very safest thing I can imagine."

"We must do our best in the calling whereunto we are called," she answered. "It is not always given us to choose, and really, Mr. Vaughn, I can't think that I should have been any more worthy of your respect if I had written those letters."

"Respect—no, certainly not, but there is a world-wide difference between the feeling of respect and——"

"Infatuation with a myth. Yes, you are right. You see I understand these things, for I have been something of a hero-worshipper myself. I can remember ever so many gods I had in my childhood, and with one or possibly two exceptions they all proved of the earth—earthy. They made me miserable, too, until I came under the care of the best woman who ever lived. She taught me that all humanity is human, and ideals seldom or never attained."

"You are speaking of your foster-mother, are you not?"

"Yes; she was the wisest woman I ever knew; she taught me how to conquer the ills of life."

"Marshfield, it occurs to me that I must seem very puerile and silly to you."

"No, indeed; if I have said anything to imply that, forgive me—I never meant it. I do think, though, that it's best to have no enthusiasms; they leave such heartaches in their wake. Hardly anything in life comes up to the expectations of an impulsive person, while if we expect little or nothing, the good that comes to us seems a full measure. Have you not found it so sometimes?"

"Now that you mention it, I believe I have frequently; but

where, let me ask, did you get all this wisdom? One does not learn these things by being told them."

"I have lived a great deal of it, and the rest I have seen others live."

"You say your friend taught you to conquer the ills of life. Now, how, for instance, would you overcome the fate which held you bound to duties of a prosaic sort when you were continually longing to shake them and fly to the other end of the earth?"

"I should patiently bide the shaking time. You know 'All things come to him who waits,' though my experience proves that they are not always satisfactorily attained."

"Not always, no; but how can a fellow tell that they won't be till he tries?"

"I have often thought," said the secretary, musingly, that it is a great pity to spend the best years of one's life in accumulating the means of subsistence. If the needs of civilization were fewer it would materially decrease the miseries of the world."

"For my part," said Vaughn, quickly, "I could be content with the Indian's blanket—or a yellow robe and begging bowl. There are infinite possibilities in the latter. Give me the freedom of the globe and civilization may have its fol-de-rols."

Six weeks after this conversation found Vaughn with still no clue to the identity of his correspondent. All her letters reached him through the publishers, but they were gradually growing less frequent, and colder in tone. It was very strange, he thought, for it had not been long since in one of those thrilling epistles which so elated him she had exclaimed:

"Almost thou persuadest me, Darwin, that the only things desirable in this world are you, a moonlight night and the Nile; but wait yet a little longer. You shall see my face—I swear it."

Now it seemed that she was trying to get rid of him without fulfilling this promise.

Miss Marshfield watched his growing disinclination for business with annoyance, and finally she said to him:

"Mr. Vaughn, you are not well."

"I?" he returned in surprise; "oh, yes, I am always well." A moment after, he added: "Queer, my father said something about that too, but I have never been sick in my life, and certainly am not now."

She said no more, but watched him furtively as he sat over his work, the two little wrinkles in his forehead drawn into a positive scowl. She noticed that he was sallow, thinner in flesh than usual, and that his eyes bore evidences of insomnia. The afternoon light fell across him, and for the first time his secretary was fully conscious of the change in him. Involuntarily she let her hands slip from the keys as she uttered an exclamation of alarm.

Vaughn looked up and met her gaze; there was something in it beside alarm, too—something that astonished him. It seemed like a look of tender pity, but he thought it hardly possible that he could have read it aright.

Supposing he had! He felt almost suffocated for a moment, and as Miss Marshfield dropped her eyes and colored slightly, he sprang to his feet and asked if the room wasn't uncomfortably warm. She made some unintelligible reply and he lowered a window; then, instead of resuming his chair came and stood beside her while her nimble fingers played rather nervously over the keys. At length he spoke.

"Your eyes would entice the truth out of a confirmed liar, Marshfield. I may as well tell you the whole sickening story, though of course you'll say it was to be expected. She's given me the sack—without even the common decency of saying good-bye. She's been trying it for a long time, and now she's done it. Very shabby of her, don't you think?"

"It undoubtedly seems shabby treatment from your point of view, but it was the most merciful thing she could do."

"Because why?"

"Because that correspondence was unfitting you for business and making you more visionary and idealistic than ever, which wasn't at all necessary."

"You speak with your accustomed plainness."

"Yes, I am in earnest, but I hope you are not offended."

"How should I be—with you? When you have not been giving me good advice—which, by the way, I wish I had taken—you have been doing my neglected work. I have no reason for complaining of you, at all events. Things have turned out about as you predicted. She can't be a person of good principles—she must be a flirt. She—she must have found somebody else."

"Oh, let us cover her with the mantle of charity, and suppose her nothing bad, but only wrinkled and ugly. She couldn't

help that, you know. The transcendent love you offered her would have tempted any woman——”

“How do you know I offered her transcendent love?”

“I have heard you talk of her several times.”

“Come, Marshfield, let up on me. I’m ready now to assent to all the spiteful things you’ve said about her. I do hereby solemnly swear that to the best of my knowledge and belief she’s a big-bearded man; that in addition to, and notwithstanding that, she’s a leathery old woman who has been amusing herself with my feeble-mindedness, and warming over her stale romance at the fire of my idiotic passion.”

“Did I really mention feeble-mindedness?”

“Oh, you might as well! But this isn’t wading through that pile of letters. Some one has got to take a trip, and owing to my father’s fancy that I have been confined too closely of late, it’s been

decided that I am the one. My father, you see, doesn’t know about Nevada.”

“No,” said Miss Marshfield, scarcely heeding the latter part of his remark. “Shall you be gone long?”

“Two or three weeks, I think,” he replied, and became absorbed in his reading.

At six o’clock they had finished, and then, as she was donning her street clothes Vaughn remembered certain things it was necessary to talk over in view of the intended trip. So they lingered by the grate fire, without lighting up, because it was pleasanter to talk in the twilight. The business affairs they discussed were not of vital importance, but the secretary seemed not to notice that, and the junior partner talked on leisurely, rocking his office chair. The firelight played over their faces, and through the uncurtained window shone the first refulgence of a full moon.

This was the window which commanded a view of the lots, with their lumber of old machinery. There was no snow, and over the motley array the moon poured a silvery flood, lending



it a weird interest it was far from possessing by daylight. The sharp angles and ugly protuberances of the pile were softened by the hazy glow that made the shadows seem to hide strange things—mystical things—things which belonged to the land of dreams.

The spell of the hour was on these two as they sat there by the fire, and neither was willing to break it. They talked in low tones, with throbbing pauses between their inconsequent sentences.

Presently Vaughn leaned over to poke the fire, and when he settled back again, he was nearer to Miss Marshfield than before—so near that his left hand easily reached and clasped her right, which lay on the arm of her chair. She did not attempt to withdraw it, but made some irrelevant remark to which he returned a vague reply. She looked at the coals, but his eyes were on her face.

"Marshfield!" The name was uttered very softly, and he bent closer still. "Could you ever—would it be possible—"

Her look stopped him. She had turned on him those speaking eyes which sometimes seemed to belie the calmness of her demeanor, and there was no mistaking their expression this time. He understood as well as if she had put it into words.

Thoroughly agitated, he rose, and standing behind her chair, laid his hand on her shoulder as he said unsteadily:

"Marshfield, you force me to believe in the luck of fools. In a natural course of events you would despise me—thank God for the unnatural. Don't speak, please. I'm afraid of your speech; it might contradict what your eyes have told me, and it's too good to be contradicted." He had bent lower until his dark locks mingled with hers.

Miss Marshfield did not speak, she was shaking with silent laughter.

"What is it," he asked, "more fun at my expense? My dear girl I can't blame you, but I have a strange feeling, Marshfield—that it is your image I have had in my heart all the time, and never a dream of a myth. Explain that, will you?"

Then Miss Marshfield spoke, and this was what she said:

"Darwin, almost thou persuadest me that the only things desirable in this world are you, a moonlight night and the Nile."

"What!" exclaimed Vaughn, straightening up, well-nigh paralyzed. "How did you know she said that?"

"Because 'she' and I are one."

Impetuously he whirled her chair about until she faced him.

"You are Nevada!"

"Yes, is it incredible?"

"Only in the light of your outrageous equivocation."

"Oh, I didn't equivocate much, it wasn't necessary. You were very easy prey, Darwin."

"Was I, indeed? But this minute I recollect a dozen awful fibs you told me about Nevada. For instance, you said——"

"Yes, I know. I'll admit that my course was a little irregular, but you see I was all the time easing my conscience with the promise of an explanation. It was very exciting, and I admit that temptation made me carry it too far. Forgive me, pray. I have never romanced before, but you wrote such letters—ah, such letters Darwin. You are a past master in love-making. I don't think I could have concluded to give up the correspondence so soon, but for the effect it was having on you."

"I was something undone, that's a fact. And to think it was my dear Marshfield all the time. Do you remember when I asked why you couldn't have been Nevada? You might have told me then."

"But I was somewhat piqued to see you so coolly setting me down as inferior to your correspondent. It was evident that your plain secretary had not the ghost of a chance."

"So then you wanted me to fall in love with my secretary."

"Perhaps I did—the possibility never presented itself to you, however."

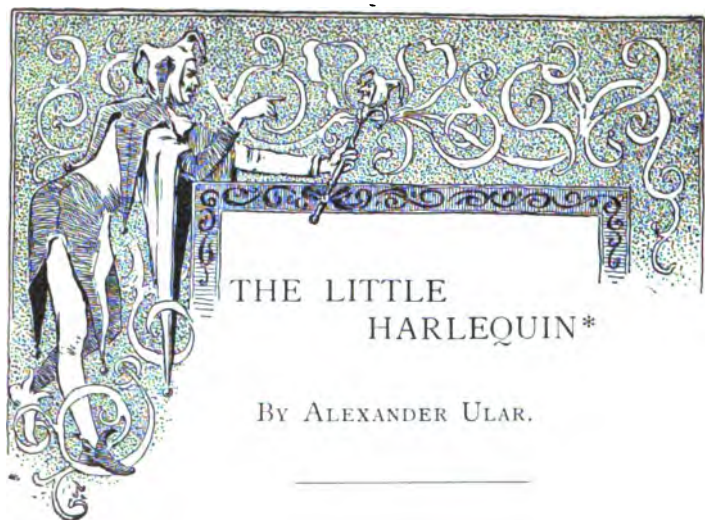
"Oh, Marshfield, I have always adored you as you very well know, but somehow it seemed to me that you were not the sort of woman to respond. Many a time I have said to myself, 'Marshfield is a delightful chum, but she wouldn't listen to a love story.'"

"I think the very gods would listen and capitulate to such a story as you have to tell; what then could be expected of me whose wild desire was with you in Egypt, even when you thought me most prosaic?"

The two chairs were close together now, in the shadows which the firelight was throwing into fantastic shapes.

"The wonder of it!" said Vaughn. "Marshfield, my dear, invaluable Marshfield, who will keep me sober and sensible whether I will or no, and Nevada, the mate of my soul. Oh, Nevada, we shall float down the Nile together. In fancy I see already the dark-gliding waters and the glint of the moonlight on the pyramids."





A FEW evenings ago I was sitting in my room, together with a few friends. We had been reading aloud a drama written by one of us, and were amusing ourselves with a discussion as to what constituted the most tragic circumstances that can possibly arise in life, that would be a fitting setting for a hero of a drama. My friend B., an unusually keen observer, who waited, as was his wont in a discussion, until every one else had had his say, to put the question in a new light, by the aid of a few words, at last remarked, that in dwelling upon the complicated and tragic conflicts of the mind, we had forgotten the most simple and tragic ones of all. The most tragic human being is the one who, in spite of unusual mental attainments, is brought low by the consciousness of great physical ugliness. Then, when we all protested against this "idealizing of a most inferior sort of tragedy," based upon bodily peculiarities, he said he was sure we had again misunderstood him, and so he told us the following little Italian story, for the truth of which he vouched:

In a tiny tower in the vicinity of Modena once lived a curious young man. The inhabitants at first avoided him but later grew to look upon him as a sort of official clown, whose duty it was to make them laugh. No one in the town knew exactly who or what he was. His real name was unpronounceable.

*Translated by Virginia Watson, from the German, for Short Stories. Illustrations by William A. Mackay.

He had appeared suddenly on the scene, had rented two rooms, and lived quietly in retirement. The old woman with whom he lodged said that he had a quantity of books, and that he spent the entire day reading or writing. She had a funny story about him, too, that she was fond of telling. When he first came to her and saw the large mirror in his bedroom, he fell into a sudden rage, and, seizing the wash-basin, hurled it at the mirror so that it broke and the pieces fell all about the room. But what did that matter? Of course, he had paid her for both mirror and basin (by which she had incidentally made a good bargain), and had only stipulated that there must never be a mirror in his room again.

Every time this story was told in the town, some one, particularly among the young girls, began to giggle. It was so plain why he could not stand a mirror—he was so terribly ugly! His figure was very small and lank, but he had a huge hump on his back which seemed to contract his chest by its weight and to make an upright position in walking impossible, as it was incredible that the long, thin legs, that the children declared clattered at every step, as if they were wooden, could carry such a body. His arms were almost as bad as his legs, reaching nearly to his knees, which gave his whole body an ape-like appearance. There was no trace of a neck to be found. His gigantic head sat directly between his shoulders. This was perhaps the most peculiar feature of all. It was very large at the top and very small at the bottom, so that it looked as if a wedge had been driven down between the shoulders. This likeness was probably increased by the fact that the face was drawn to one side and distorted by pain. To be sure, the large, thin, hawked nose was directly in the middle, but that only made the whole worse, for it divided the face into two entirely different halves. The mouth was much too far to the left, and the forehead slanted upwards from left to right, which was made all the more conspicuous by reason of its be-



ing particularly high and arched. Naturally a bristly confusion of ragged hair and a preposterous number of unusually deep wrinkles did not tend to make the face more attractive. The large, dark eyes might have done so; but they were really the most uncanny part of the man. Sometimes very sad, sometimes very fierce, and often there emanated from them such unrestrained glances, that had they come from another body, would have made every girl's heart beat; but with his appearance that was, of course, impossible. For let him do what he would, walk, sit, stand, recline, speak, keep silence, be sad, angry, resigned or full of enthusiasm, it was impossible to help laughing at him. When he walked he looked like an inverted pendulum. When he stood still, with his arms hanging limp at his side, as was generally the case, he looked, seen from a distance, like a colossal cropper-pigeon, it being impossible to distinguish his breast from his back any way off. And one can easily understand that the emotions of his soul, which mirrored themselves so clearly and sensibly on his countenance, produced the most ridiculous impression of all, for in such an uneven mirror the most glorious thing must appear frightfully distorted, as every one knows who has ever looked in a convex or concave glass, and laughed himself half to death at the disgusting contortion of his own body, or still more at those of his acquaintances. I should like to know, however, if you would still laugh if one of these same contortions would stick to you? At all events, the inhabitants of the little town in which our story is laid did laugh. Although he had been there two months, no one but his landlady had ever heard him speak; and she said that he had such a wonderfully beautiful soft voice that people who listened to him could scarcely help crying, and were forced to keep their eyes closed. They would have liked to know what sort of a man he really was, especially the young people, and so they tried in every way to get information in regard to him. Soon they succeeded.

One afternoon, when he was walking through the street, carrying a small package to the post-office, a piece of paper, with writing on it, stuck out of his coat pocket. A small boy, noted for his boldness, succeeded in stealing the paper from the pocket, and handed it over to his elder brothers and sisters. The elders were charmed at the chance to satisfy their curiosity, for the paper was written all over, and without doubt by himself.

At the top was the date, September 15, just a week before. Then it continued :

"Is it fate that makes man always regard that which is forever closed to him as the most desirable of all things? That he must always love and admire most that which he lacks altogether? Or am I in this also an exception, as I am bodily?

"Oh, when will there be an end to this terrible flight from the world and my own ugliness? When shall I learn to be content with the treasures which I have, and to forget my own miserable unimportant limitations? Am I the only one who has no mercy on himself? All other people forget their afflictions and are proud of their good points, and I do the opposite. Why then? Why?

"And has my flight been of any good? Oh, these horrible two years of flight from one negation into another! And during them always again and again the awaking to this horrible reality of the body that drives me back into my misery—the misery of a man who throws his treasures to the winds and tries to conquer by means of his defects. Is there then not enough irony in the world?

"Asceticism, asceticism! Death of things of the body—a wonderful principle! I only know that asceticism and the breeding of unrestrained ideas are one and the same. And why can I not love something more than a mere spiritual love? Oh, but I can; but not be loved in return. Can the 'beautiful, great soul' which I possess, take the place of the glorious body that I desire? How would a sketch do of Thersites as Don Juan, an attempt at a self-vivisection, by a person made insane by bodily defects?

"I believe one is finally too cowardly to take leave of life, because he would still like to enjoy that which is impossible. For example, I have in mind a man who will never die of hunger, because he would first like to write another Faust. It is the same story with me. I cannot be beautiful, and would yet celebrate the triumph of the body—for what else is love? And I cannot die until then." . . .

The good people could not understand much of this diary; but one thing they were able to read in it—he was in love! That was killingly ridiculous. Now they knew it, and were proud of their new knowledge. The next day the entire town knew it, and every one whispered to every one else: "He is in love." A band of rude schoolboys called after him down the

street: "There he goes; he is in love!" at which he fell into such a rage that everyone who saw him screamed with laughter.

For three weeks the Teatro Classico had been in town, and had had great success. To be sure the performances were not very classic, and people were surprised that "he" went every evening, being himself so much funnier than the plays. He never laughed in the theatre, not even when the rest of the audience were convulsed with amusement.

The Harlequin was so comical, enormously tall and thin, who impressed people mostly (though, of course, without intending it) by his never knowing what to do with his arms and legs. If he were walking on a level he tripped over his own feet; if he went up the stairs, he slipped on his hands. The only fat thing about the entire man was his red nose (he was a great drinker), and the only thing connected with him on which you might waste pity was his audience. The whole town was soon saying that Harlequin's acting was perfectly tasteless, repeating the words of Maestro Poccini, who now played the dance music, but who had once been in the orchestra of the Milan Opera for a month.

The female portion of the town had a regular hatred for the little leading lady of the theatre, who was a sweet little creature, called Lala, sixteen years old, small and dainty, with charming little feet, a slender throat, large childish eyes, full of wonder, and black hair. As she laughed often, for every one exerted himself to be witty before her, her delicious little shining sharp teeth were also visible. She was always in a good humor; it was only seldom that she sat still, with her hands in her lap, dreaming of sad things, perhaps of her parents' early deaths and her loneliness among strangers, which even her gay profession was not quite able to drive away.

Lala was so attractive that she soon had the entrée to many of the houses in the town, particularly after people had learned from the director of her sad lot, and knew that she was a thoroughly good girl in spite of many temptations. The conversation often turned upon "him." No one knew his name, and she laughed with the others at the ridiculous creature who appeared at the theatre every evening, who never applauded, and who wrote whole nights through. Lala knew this, for living on the opposite side of the street she could see into his room when she went to bed at night, thanks to a beautiful lamp, which had no equal in the town, a lamp with a woman

for a pedestal. She had seen it plainly, and this lamp often burned all night through, for she often saw it when she awoke. But he was terribly comical. She could never help laughing when she saw him. He should have been Harlequin—the other smelt so of brandy.

Aye, that would have been just the thing. "He" should have been the Harlequin, and then the theatre would have been twice as popular. Such a curious man he was! He often wrote all night long! And the pedestal of his lamp was a girl. He was in love, too. What interesting things do happen! It is after all worth while living.

"He" was scarcely ever to be seen now except in the theatre, leaving the house only after dark. Something in him seemed to have changed. He walked so much more slowly and haltingly than before, as if he were tired or continually thinking of something that gave him no rest. The audience at the theatre paid almost as much attention to him as to the actors on the stage, and they noticed that he turned first red and then white, and that he breathed heavily and trembled when Lala was playing; and his eyes rested on her with such an appealing and glowing expression that all who saw him had trouble to smother their laughter. How amusing the theatre was!

One fine day the tall Harlequin, reeking still of brandy, was found dead in his bed. The doctor said that he had died of heart failure. He was no great loss to the company, but the director was obliged to engage another Harlequin, and the theatre was closed for three days out of respect to the dead.

On the afternoon after the old Harlequin's death, another event of great interest took place in the town. "He" went crazy! At least so his landlady declared. She said he had behaved most curiously of late. He often wept aloud, and stamped his feet; again he swore and threw heavy books about the room. He had not been to bed for three days in succession, but had spent the entire night writing, and then early in the morning he had sent a small package to the post, which she believed contained paper. She had been quite worried about him once. For two days and nights he had written continuously, covering a great mass of paper, then had tossed about on his bed for a few hours sobbing, and at last, laughing horribly, he had burned a whole pile of the paper on which he had written.

Things must have come to a pretty pass with him. He had

ordered a long mirror in which he could see himself at full length, and he had laughed and sprung about, talked and sung the greatest nonsense, and gesticulated in a manner that seemed a physical impossibility to such a body. She had been terribly frightened, but it had been so funny after all that she could not help watching him, and he had asked her if she were pleased with it all.

But curious things do happen. The director of the theatre announced that he would give no more performances, but would move to another town. He told no one his reasons for doing this, not even Lala. He only said to her that it was on account of the new Harlequin, who was the most wonderful Harlequin possible, and that she would be able to play with him better even than before.

So the entire troupe moved to another town, but it seemed strange to Lala that the new Harlequin had not yet put in his appearance.

At the same time "he" had paid the rent for his rooms six months in advance, and leaving all his things behind him, he went away.

The last and principal number on the programme was a love scene between Lala and Harlequin; but neither Lala nor any other member of the troupe had seen the new Harlequin, and Lala did not even know what she was to say in this new rôle. The director grinned as he remarked that this was not at all necessary, that it would go off all the better. The last number came. Lala, with a slight tinge of embarrassment, very becoming to her, stepped onto the stage and looked anxiously about her. The new Harlequin rushed at her from the opposite wing of the stage, and threw himself at her feet. It was "he." She screamed aloud from astonishment and fear, and trembled all over. The audience burst into applause.

And now an improvised love scene unfolded itself on the stage, that convulsed the audience with laughter. After Lala had recovered from her terror her natural cleverness aided her to play the part of the beauty who refused so terrible a lover. He, too, made it easy for her. How wonderfully she was playing! She was delighted with herself, and, for the first time in her life, was greatly interested in her own acting, and felt really inspired. He acted and spoke so naturally that her words and gestures came of themselves. It was glorious! How he wept and implored and laughed and swore! All would

have been so touching in a tragedy, and yet with what art he turned every emotion, no matter how fervent or grave it might be, into something comic, so that each moment the crowded house fell into a fresh paroxysm of laughter.

The play was over. He had been rejected, and had hurried away in desperation to hang himself. The applause was tremendous. Candy, flowers, parasols, bouquets, gold pieces and wreaths fell in a heap on the stage. Lala and Harlequin had to bow again and again until the director excused them on the plea of fatigue.

It was easy to see that both were pretty well exhausted; but what else could be expected after such fatiguing acting? They were both so tired that they did not attend the unusually liberal supper which the director gave in their honor that evening. He could easily afford to do so, since the theatre was already sold out for a fortnight ahead.

Lala and Harlequin still sat in the green-room, each on a box. He seemed greatly excited and trembled, and kept looking before him with an indescribable expression, half sad, half glad, which, however, on account of the metamorphosis which every emotion of his face was subject to, would have caused great merriment to any one who might have seen it.

But Lala saw nothing. She held her handkerchief before her face, and sobbed and wept bitterly for a long while. At last he rose and stroked her hair, saying in a wonderfully soft voice, and in a quivering, low tone:

"Lala, my poor child, go to bed, won't you? or you'll be sick. You are so worked up."

Then he walked slowly to his room, which was quite near. Curious must have been the thoughts that filled his brain, for he did not hear the applause of the audience that stood in the street waiting to see him go home with the expectation of another amusing performance. The manner with which he crossed the street, the fanciful, earnest expression and the tired movements were wonderfully done, and the applause followed him as far as his house. He sat at the window, weeping long and softly. Above in the heavens the moon and countless stars were shining, and he felt within himself the same horrible loneliness which separates one star from another. Between him and the other star, for which he longed, there was a frightful icy space that nothing could bridge over. . . . He wept, and below in the street the gallery gods yodeled up to him, the

king of all merry-makers. It was some time before he became quiet. Then he rose, lit the lamp and took a locked book out of a drawer and wrote in it with a firm hand:

"November 17. To-day I have thrown my soul to the rabble that it might devour it, and in its death-struggle it awoke another soul. How long will Lala have a soul?"

This was another leaf from his diary that the citizens of the town would not have understood, but as Lala's name occurred in it, they might have inferred from that that he was in love with her.

And Lala? She could not tell what had happened to her. She wept half the night through, and prayed that God would bestow upon her this great talent and wonderful power that made her now so sad and so full of longing. And then again, when she pictured him to herself she shook with laughter, but curiously enough, her laughter was no longer the same as of old, and she was ashamed of it as soon as it was over. She slept very badly. The next morning she found about two dozen magnificent bouquets awaiting her when she awoke. They all came from gentlemen in the town who expressed their admiration for her in the visiting cards which accompanied the flowers. They gave her great pleasure, and she was happy all day, chatting with her fellow-actors and actresses, who were all jealous of her, but appeared exceedingly affectionate, and made jokes about Harlequin, who was nowhere to be seen; and naturally she laughed with the others, and told them everything she knew about him.

Now began a delightful life for her. She received flowers and jewelry daily, and was invited to entertainments which she was delighted to attend in company with the director. Harlequin had refused every invitation from the first, and was never seen outside of the theatre.

Lala often sat alone now in her room doing nothing. She did not like to go out alone, and she had no need to learn her rôles by heart or rehearse. Harlequin improvised everything, and so wonderfully that she was able to play just as well as if she had studied every word and gesture carefully. When she sat thus, her charming, wondering childish eyes staring before her into vacancy, thinking how she would play this or that, as she was fond of doing, being inspired with the idea of sometime becoming a great actress, she would ask herself how it happened that every time after she had acted with Harlequin

she felt so sad and yet so happy, though she might have been amusing herself all the day until then with silly jokes, and though these improvised pieces were really the most comic things one could imagine. But she did not find out what the cause of it all really was.

Only one thing was clear: That Harlequin must have something to do with it, and that he himself was not nearly so ridiculous as he always appeared. At first she talked very little with him. He did not seem to care for it, and she, too, was better pleased when she could enjoy listening to his voice without looking at him, for he was so comical that the most earnest word which he might utter could not but seem funny. She had told him this once innocently and without embarrassment, and had begged his pardon in case she ever laughed when he had no intention of being ridiculous. She had said this to him without glancing at him, one evening after the play, when she had been talking gaily for quite a while with some fine gentlemen, and he had advised her to be careful of such people. Her words had made him very sad, and he had asked her in a low tone:

"So to you, too, then, I am only a sort of amusement machine? And can you not realize either that I am a man with a heart and not merely a Harelquin? Is it true that you cannot stand a few hours with me any more than the others?"

She marveled at his words at first, scarcely understanding them. Then she glanced up at him. He was sitting in the dim lamplight, his legs in the shadow, his face too indistinctly visible, and it suddenly flashed across her mind that he looked like a large black egg standing on end, and this ridiculous idea was so overpowering that she laughed right in his face.

He grew crimson, and began to sob with anger, and sprang up, his arms hanging loosely down by his side, and clinched his hands convulsively. After standing thus a while, a picture of desperate rage, such as might be exhibited by a murderer who was listening to his death sentence, he said softly, with choking voice:

"And it was for you alone that I became a Harlequin." Then he left, not waiting for an answer.

All night long Lala tried to make up her mind whether she ought to be amused or ashamed. She could not sleep for excitement. He was surely the most curious man she had ever met in her life.

The following day she begged his pardon—with averted face—and after that she talked oftener with him. Her fellow-actors and actresses, and more particularly the gentlemen who frequented the side scenes, began to make jokes about “her good taste,” and to tease her about Harlequin, so that she was often on the point of crying with anger, and it grew worse day by day.

She could not defend him; it would have been silly, and how could she help his being so ridiculous; and then all their jokes fitted him so perfectly! Why should she not make fun of him as the others did?

She did so, and amused herself royally with her girl friends and some gentlemen who seemed greatly interested in her, and who gave her all sorts of costly things. It was only after she had played with “him” that none could make her enjoy the rest of the evening.

Indeed Harlequin seemed to know all the details of her life, and to be always watching her. He now took for his subject in the theatre the jealousy and impotent rage of a deceived and rejected lover, and he was almost funnier in this than in his earlier scenes.

From this time on Lala always experienced a feeling of secret unrest, almost fear, when she had to play with him, for as soon as she turned away from him and closed her eyes so that she could not see him, she felt that he was thoroughly in earnest, and she was often on the point of crying or running off the stage, and the only way in which she could retain herself was to look at him. Then she was sure that he was not in earnest.

She was standing one evening before the beginning of the performance, behind the wings with a gentleman who was endeavoring to persuade her, by all means in his power, to take supper with him that evening, promising her that she would be sure to enjoy it. She had certainly no intention of accepting, for it would not do for her to take supper alone with a man, so she said to him, with a saucy smile, which he naturally took for an acceptance: “Perhaps.” Then for the first time she noticed that Harlequin was standing beside her and had overheard it all. But what did that matter? She did not explain. She only wondered why he looked so pale, as pale almost as a corpse, she thought, and a cold shudder ran down her back.

That day, for the first time in her life, she really feared the

scene, and yet there was no reason for doing so. To the audience it seemed as if they both played better than ever before. The deadly pallor of the deceived lover was simply grand, and the secret anxiety pictured on her face was truly beautiful, and the way she avoided looking at him was delicious.

She could not stand this deathly paleness, could not look at him. If she had only explained matters to him! And now,



whenever she was not looking directly at him, it seemed to her again and again, and more and more surely every second, that every word he uttered was thoroughly in earnest. That was the tone of desperate sorrow, that was surely the tone of genuine anger, and again that was the imploring, eager tone which will not believe the worst.

"Must I then die on account of thee?" he said to her with touching softness. The audience applauded loudly, but Lala suddenly began to tremble, and uttering a terrible cry she sprang from the stage into the parquet as if pursued.

At midnight, after talking over an hour with Lala, Harlequin went to his room. All she had said was:

"Now I am only the more afraid of you."

The lamp in his room burned all night long. His neighbor in the next room, the director, heard him sobbing for a long while, and then heard him say some words in a foreign tongue, slowly and with wonderful expression. Then everything was quiet. . . .

But the lamp still burned when the bright morning sun laughed in at the window. His diary lay open on the table in his room. The last words he had written in it were:

"Now the soul to which I awakened is dead. I follow it."

By the side of it lay a thick, sealed letter to Lala, a package of papers and an empty bottle. On the bed lay Harlequin—dead! He no longer looked ridiculous. An exceedingly touching expression rested on the pale features of a martyr.

When Lala was led to the bed she threw herself on "dear, little Harlequin's" body, sobbing piteously, and murmured hopelessly: "And, after all, I did love him!" . . .

The package of papers was taken to the police, so that the cause of his death might be known, and Lala learned that she had driven the greatest Italian poet of the present day to his death.





A GRATIFIED AMBITION*

BY CELIA E. SHUTE.

CALM and peaceful under the twilight glow lay the mountain-bordered valley. The sun, big and red, had dropped behind the lofty hills, about whose bases dusk was fast heaping ever-deepening shadows. The brilliant scarlet, yellow and lilac bands that had made the western sky radiant with the compensating after-glow, were melting into each other, fading and leaving behind but a faint reminder of their marvelous but evanescent beauty. A cool wind swept across from the remoter heights.

High above the valley, on a jutting mass of rock that thrust itself out aggressively near the summit of a spur of this mountain range, sat a girl, whose earnest gaze was fixed upon a narrow footpath, the upper end of which terminated near her unsafe perch. This trail made a serpentine line down the mountain side, clearly traceable where the foliage grew less densely, or the path debouched on the edges of the cliffs. Lights were beginning to send little flickering sparkles out in the valley below. It was growing late. The girl, who had been as motionless as a statue, gave the nervous start of one whose patience has been put to a severe test, when a tall young man wearing the coarse dress of a lumberman came noiselessly around the boulder on which she was sitting. He was panting from his rapid climb, and his sunbrowned face was beaded with perspiration. The girl gave him no greeting beyond a hasty nod, but held out her hand with a gesture, the authoritative significance of which was fortunately modified by the look of appeal in her eyes.

"Did you get anything? Do tell me, quick! How can you

*Written for Short Stories.

be so slow, Dave Kent?" said she, impetuously, the words tripping over each other in her impatience.

"Well, I did git suthin'," responded the man in a deliberate, nasal tone. "I don't see the use in bein' in such an everlastin' hurry 'bout it, though. I reckon it ain't goin' to do you much good by the heft on't, anyway. Jest you look here, now."

Without haste he extracted from one of his capacious pockets a thin, crackling letter, which he scrutinized with an aggravating assumption of seriousness that brought an angry light into the girl's dark eyes.

"Miss Adeliny Moss," read he aloud, in a mocking tone. "Miss Adeliny Moss! Ahem! What I'm partic'lar about understandin' is all this printin' up in one corner. I ca'culate——"

With a sudden spring Adeline twisted the letter from his grasp, seating herself on the ledge of rock again with it in her hand, but making no attempt to open it, a fact which struck David Kent, who was curiously regarding her, uncertain whether to be annoyed or amused at the result of her unexpected celerity, as deserving of comment.

"Pass it over if you ain't got the courage to open it yourself," observed he, casually. "I don't believe it holds anything I ain't able to stan' up under."

To his astonishment, Adeline held it out to him at once, distinct relief marking her manner as she did so. "I s'pose I'm foolish," she said, with a deprecatory laugh, "but somehow I dread to see what's in it after all."

The sudden abandonment of her usual self-confident manner caused Kent to look down on her from his straight height with a puzzled expression. He was a handsome fellow, with that physical charm that is the product of health, an existence closely in touch with nature, and the unquestioning acceptance of events as they chance to come. Adeline, in the midst of her absorption, was dimly conscious of these rugged good looks, as she watched him pass the blade of his knife cautiously through the end of the envelope. He hollowed it, and peered in with an affectation of great curiosity before returning it.

"Looks consid'able like po'try to me," he insinuated, with a laugh, leaning his head comfortably against the rock behind him, and looking idly up at the pine tree tops that almost shut out the sky. An innate sense of delicacy forbade his watching her as she read the letter, but the speculation in his glance swiftly gave way to concern when, upon hearing a smothered

cry, he discovered Adeline with her face hidden in her hands, and her slender body quivering with distressing sobs. On the ground near her lay outspread two sheets of paper, both of which were covered with written characters. Kent regarded them as if they were possessed of fangs, but, not knowing what else to do, picked them up and rapidly scanned the pages for enlightenment. An expression of astonished delight overspread his face as he did so. One was a poem written in Adeline's own hand, the other its brief and formal declination by an editor to whom she had offered it. The fact that she had made such a venture completely outweighed in Kent's estimation the to her deplorable discovery that the outcome of the attempt had been unqualifiedly disheartening. There was sincere admiration in his glance as he turned and looked at her again.

"Ain't you a great one!" he said, in a tone that was almost reverential.

"No one worth while seems to think so," said Adeline with unconscious rudeness, giving her handkerchief a final sweep across her eyes and sitting erect. "Nobody knows how hard I've worked, and how many times I've tried, an' everything comes straight back to me; my very prettiest poetry, too, and all the folks round home say it's better'n half they do print."

"I never seen its beat," interpolated Kent, warmly, distressed that he could offer her no more adequate consolation. "Don't feel bad, Adeliny. You must keep at it, that's all. It'll be wuth it when you see your name tacked to one of them po'try pages in a magazine. I ain't no great shakes of a prophet, perhaps, but I know I ain't far out of the way when I say it's comin' round before you're much older. Jest you make a note o' that, now."

The hopeful words, that desire lent the force of prophecy, affected Adeline almost as their realization would have done. She laughed an elated laugh, so unnatural that it was checked almost as soon as begun.

"I believe I'm gittin' wild," she said, half frightened, but with sparkling eyes. "You're right, though, Dave. I must work harder, but it's awful discouraging, when I want to succeed so bad."

Kent turned to her resolutely. A daring thought had come to him as he watched her in misery at the sight of her distress.

"See here, Addy," he began, with a change of manner that at once commanded her attention. "You jest give me some of

your writin's, an' the next time I go down to the city I'll show 'em to Nate Peters' cousin, Joe Blodgett. He's on a fust-class newspaper, an' I reckon he knows 'bout all of the bigbugs in a writin' way in the kintry. He'd ought to help you out some-way."

There was an eloquence in Adeline's eyes as she looked up at Kent that kindled a sudden bravery in his heart. He had been her ardent but timid lover for years. Now the change in the relations between them, the confidence implied in his judgment by her acceptance of and reliance upon his assistance, emboldened him.

"Why won't you marry me some day, Adeliny?" he asked boldly. "I've wanted you for years, an' I ain't no doubt but what I could help you along some, too, if you will. What do you say?"

The sudden access of power in his voice and manner was not without appreciable effect upon Adeline. She was thrilled by the unexpectedness of the appeal, by the complexity of feeling that surged within her.

"If you'll git one of my poems printed in a magazine or one of them city papers I'll marry you whenever you want me to—there!" she declared, impetuously.

Kent stared at her a moment, uncomprehendingly, then caught her to him with unconscious roughness. His big frame was trembling with joy, and yet an almost imperceptible chill of disappointment mingled with his unlooked-for rapture. It would have been difficult for him to have said in words that the business contingency destroyed the perfectness of the moment, yet he nevertheless felt it vaguely.

Several weeks later, toward sunset, the mountain train, consisting of a wheezy engine and one dilapidated car, slowed up at the little station, which was simply a canvas roof over four poles and a board flooring. Under this modest shelter Adeline Moss was waiting. There was a hot flush on her cheeks, and her eyes were feverish with expectation. When she saw David Kent on the platform of the car her cheeks paled suddenly. He was waving something above his head, with an exaggerated simulation of delight.

Kent was the only passenger. The train did not stop; it merely slowed up sufficiently to make it safe for him to swing himself off, and then went on its unhastening way with a shrill, reverberant whistle. Kent's face was a cheerful thing to see.

He put his arm about Adeline's waist, and pulled her down upon the board bench that had been provided for the convenience of the infrequent travelers who were obliged to await here the caprices of this irresponsible railroad line.

"Look here!" he commanded, proudly, opening the paper and pointing to the top of one of the columns. Adeline's breath came in choking gasps as she followed the direction of his finger, for there, just as she had pictured it so many times, was her poem, with her name printed in larger type at the end.

She stooped forward, with a swift, passionate movement, and kissed the printed words. Her throat was beating visibly and her eyes were full of tears, but she did not speak. When one has the exceptional experience of seeing a dream fulfilled there are no words that fittingly express the joy of that peerless moment. This undemonstrativeness hurt Kent. He felt personally injured by it.

"I thought you'd take it different," he said, despondently. "It ain't been no picnic, I want to tell you, gittin' Joe Blodgett to put it in. That Resoundin' Recorder's a great paper. Joe says there's hundreds of folks waitin' to git suthin' took, but, of course, there ain't a chance for hardly any of 'em. You're in luck, an' Joe's promised to print suthin' more, too. Look here, though! I forgot to tell you it's changed some, Blodgett called it 'editin'.' He said you mustn't take offense, 'cause they're all served alike."

Adeline had listened breathlessly to what he had been saying, content to view the poem as an entity, and reluctant as yet to analyze its component attractions. Now, after one startled glance, she read it through hurriedly, her expression changing rapidly as she did so. Kent shrank before the pain in her eyes as she turned them upon him when she had reached the end. He cleared his throat noisily.

"In my opinion, he ain't bettered it any," he ventured. "But he said they'd got to suit the folks that run the paper fust, an' I had to let him have his way or bring it back home. You'd rather had it in, hadn't you?"

"I s'pose so," answered Adeline, in a dull tone. She looked at the altered poem with something like repulsion. "I s'pose there ain't no reason why I should be treated different from other folks," she added proudly, rising to her feet.

Kent twisted around on the bench restlessly. A wave of

dark red color surged over his tanned face and neck. He took something from his pocket with a nervous movement.

"He—he sent you two dollars for it," he stammered, huskily. "Here 'tis."

Adeline had not noticed his confusion. She whirled about in amazement, her eyes fixed upon the note he held toward her. Into her troubled face came a beautifying flash of joy.

"Oh, ain't that fine! Ain't it grand!" she cried. "Why, Dave, how much money I can earn if he'll take 'em right along. Do you s'pose he will?"

"I s'pose other folks will have to have a show sometimes," answered Kent, with a dubious accent. "I reckon you'll fare as well as the rest in the long run, though."

He spoke with an effort. The color seemed to have become stationary in his thin face. Adeline had folded the paper so that the poem came uppermost. She held it in one hand, the money in the other, alternately regarding them with supremely happy eyes. The stab that the editorial liberties taken by Joe Blodgett had inflicted was already in great measure healed by the discovery that he was willing to pay for his corrections and substitutions. She gave no thought to Kent's failure to claim his reward for the success of his endeavors in her behalf. Already she was anticipating the publication of other poems, lost in a dream of unbroken successes. And as for Kent himself, the mazes of a mathematical calculation, the approximate result of which was taking his breath away, formed an adequate argument against any immediate indulgence of sentiment on his part.

The office of the Resounding Recorder was a very active place before an edition went to press. The bustle incident to final arrangements penetrated even into the editor's private sanctum, a dingy little retreat, with but one window that opened on a narrow alley. The wall of the building across the way was so near as to admit of the entrance of but little light or air, but ineffectual as the window was, Blodgett always had a sense of comfort in seeing it there when he temporarily occupied his superior's chair.

Late one afternoon, when he was at work there, a messenger brought word to him that some one was waiting to see him. The assistant editor was very busy. He frowned at the interruption.

"Did he send up any name?" inquired he, ungraciously.

"No, sirree," answered the boy, with that lack of reverence that specializes his class. "He don't look's though he knows what 'tis."

"If it's a hayseed I can't spare a minute," said Blodgett, turning again to his heap of papers. "Tell him I'm busy. If he wants to wait round I'll see him in the course of an hour or so, or he can send his prize vegetables up if that's what he's after."

"He ain't got none with him," said the boy, with a grin, indicative of due appreciation of this pleasantry.

When Blodgett had finished his work, and, in accordance with a custom of long standing, had refreshed his memory by a glance at a photograph, which he produced for that purpose from a private drawer, he started downstairs, and half-way down encountered the boy again.

"That cove's got back, sir," announced he, with a meaning gesture over his shoulder. "He's in the main office 'amblin' round as if he had suthin' heavy on his mind."

"I suppose there's no help for it, then," said Blodgett, with resignation. He opened the door of the office and stepped in. David Kent was pacing back and forth at the further end of the room. He swung round at the sound of the creaking door, saw Blodgett, and lurched forward in awkward haste.

"I ain't got no money," said he doggedly, with no preliminary greeting. "I've worked an' dug from mornin' till night to git it, but I'm at the end of my rope. See here, we've got to talk this matter over, and see if there ain't no way of fixin' it up."

Blodgett looked at him steadily a moment. "Come up to the private office, then," said he, turning about, and Kent stumbled along behind him, his heavy boots making a loud clatter on the wooden stairs.

When Blodgett got his lamp lighted he saw that Kent was staring at him with a wild light in his black eyes.

"I reckon I know what you mean," said he, tentatively. "You can't pay for Miss Moss' poems any longer."

"That's about the size of it," answered Kent, with a groan. "Dad's got hurt up to camp, and it'll be months before he'll be round ag'in. It takes all I can raise to pay doctor's bills and git suthin' to eat. I can't lay by a cent for nuthin' else. When

I got your letter I was clean discouraged. I dunno what I'm goin' to do."

Blodgett accented a tune, the melody of which was hummed under his breath, with his pencil on the edge of his desk.

"You know I never believed in that scheme," he said, with something of the force of recrimination. "It was a senseless agreement on my part, and I wouldn't have made it if I'd taken time to think it over. I thought then that if you were willing to stand the expense it wasn't my place to complain, and if you can't do it any longer I'm not going to complain, either. Nobody has any call to feel injured as far as I can see, but Miss Moss. It'll be a disappointment to her, no doubt."

"That's the p'int," said Kent, bitterly. "I believe it'll about kill her when she finds out what I've been doin'. There ain't but one way to help her findin' out that I can think of." He paused and looked at Blodgett uncertainly, hesitating to place the proposition on which so much depended in jeopardy. "She's been writin' for your folks so long now, seems as if they ought to be willing to pay her themselves," said he at last, jerking the words out one by one, and with evident difficulty.

"We never pay for such things," answered Blodgett, avoiding the pleading look in his eyes. "I told you that plainly in the beginning. We can't afford to, and we don't need to, either. There are plenty of folks who'll write poetry for nothing for the sake of seeing it in print."

Kent's tall figure straightened to military erectness.

"They don't write as good as her," affirmed he, with a challenge in his voice that silenced any denial Blodgett might have had in his mind to make. Although he had a very clear recollection of the difficulties he had been obliged to surmount before the poems in question had been made fit for publication, he had no disposition to belittle the prettiness of conception and truthfulness to nature that had characterized them, and had formed his strongest inducement to put the extra work into them in response to Kent's entreaties, backed by his money.

"They're pretty enough when they're fixed up," he admitted. "But we've no idea of paying for them, and if you're out of the reckoning I don't know of any one who will."

Kent's arms were crossed on the top of the desk, and he bent his face down upon them, as Blodgett delivered this ultimatum with a resoluteness that forbade hope of modification. He was

motionless for several moments. When he raised his head Blodgett was shocked at the change on his face. It had the desperate look of one whom hope has abandoned.

"You take it too much to heart," said he, moved to compassion. "Miss Moss may succeed somewhere else, but it's only fair to tell you that I've put in a good deal of work on her things. Newspaper men, as a rule, won't do that unless it's on something that promises to make a splurge. They have too much on hand."

"I reckon that's so," assented Kent, drearily. "Adeliny's pretty well set up over what she's done, an' the folks up our way think she's something more than common. It'll break her all up to git shut off like this. I can't bear to think on't."

He thrust his hand into his breast pocket mechanically, and placed a photograph on the desk before Blodgett without a word. Under a sense of compulsion the latter favored it with a rapid glance, but as he did so sprang to his feet excitedly.

"Good God! how came you by that?" he asked, violently, then checked himself with an effort as Kent stared at him amazed.

"What's the matter?" asked Kent, dully.

Blodgett had recovered himself immediately. He sat down again with an apologetic gesture, the flush that had reddened his dark face ebbing slowly away.

"It's a little difficulty I have with my heart," he explained indifferently, noting with inward gratitude the victory of Kent's misery over his momentary curiosity. "It's gone now. Don't mind me. I'm all right."

The artificial lightness of his tone would have penetrated even Kent's dense understanding had he not been so preoccupied. As it was, Blodgett's incautious words had already slipped from his memory, and when the latter, after a moment's silence, asked abruptly if Miss Moss was a particular friend of his, he shuffled his feet nervously, dropping his eyes in discomfort under the piercing glance of those steel blue ones so full of a meaning that he was incompetent to interpret. The significance of his embarrassment was unmistakable.

"I see," said Blodgett, curtly. He walked the length of the little room several times, pulling at the ends of his heavy mustache mercilessly, then stopped in front of Kent. "You're going to be left in a hole, sure enough, if somebody doesn't lend you a hand," he said, with a noticeable change of inflec-

tion. "Sit down in that chair and tell me the whole business, from the begining to the end. Go ahead, now."

The shutting of troubles within oneself until heart and soul seem fairly rent assunder under the unaccustomed strain, is to certain temperaments one of the least endurable of earthly evils. Kent's was a nature of this kind, and he unburdened his tormented mind thankfully and freely, wholly unsuspecting that Blodgett, leaning back in his chair, watching the lean, harassed face of his wretched visitor as he talked in halting phrases, was himself the victim of emotions no less poignant because diverse. No outward sign betrayed this mental agitation, however. His face was mask-like in its immovability.

"I'm all at sea just now," said he, in answer to the petition in Kent's longing eyes, when the latter had finished his story, and an eloquent silence of several moment's duration had intervened. "Come in again the last of the week. I'll think it over between now and then, and I fancy I can manage it after all."

The deep lines on Kent's broad forehead relaxed. He was profuse with his awkward gratitude. Blodgett's impatience at his lingering almost made itself evident, yet he called him back again when he was about closing the door.

"Oh, see here!" he remarked, quite casually. "That picture you showed me—taken lately, was it?"

"'Long in the spring some time. Them snapshotters that come up the mount'in are allers beggin' of her to sit up on them rocks an' be took," replied Kent, with a pride that was pathetic.

Blodgett stepped backward quickly.

"That's all," he answered, brusklly.

He returned to his chair when the door was closed, and seemed to be listening intently to the loud and uncertain progress of his caller down the stairway, his abstraction continuing long after Kent was gone beyond recall. Then he leaned forward, unlocked a little drawer in his desk, and took from it a photograph that had come to be his chief treasure since the day he had been attracted by it in the exhibition window of a little store he was in the habit of passing daily. It was a picture of Adeline Moss, sitting on the elevated mass of rock on which she had awaited Kent's arrival with her disappointing letter.

"One of 'them snapshotter's' earliest productions, I judge,"

he remarked to himself, with a bitter curl on his lips, as he mentally compared the thoughtful, sweet, and somewhat sad young face before him with the self-conscious, self-satisfied one that Kent had exhibited with such marked delight. It was with a sigh of renunciation that he finally shook himself free of the spell that the picture cast upon him, and walked restlessly about the narrow office, his heavy brows drawn with the intensity of the analytical process he was applying to this most unexpected problem.

"There's no better advice procurable than that that prohibits interfering with the ways of Providence," he soliloquized ultimately, a vague conception of the undeveloped possibilities of the complication giving his voice a semi-tragic ring. "If the poetical illusion can be kept up until the muse is exhausted I reckon they'll be happy enough, and I deserve to arrange that for my share in this preposterous business. No doubt there are predicaments more disagreeable than my present one."

His face as he ended the peroration wore the rueful smile that, in natures humorously inclined, indicates appreciation of fate's occasional extraordinary frustration of intention, even when personally directed.

Back at his desk he took the photograph up again, addressing the pictured face that confronted him conclusively.

"No use to wonder how this would have ended if I had discovered your identity earlier," he meditated aloud. "But if I've blundered, I'm taking my punishment like a man, for, since yours is the only face I've ever fancied, I'm going to be generous and help you and your mountain lover out."

He did not destroy the picture when he had announced this decision to the shadowy Adeline, but put it carefully away again and locked the drawer.





THE CLOCK*

THERE was at Epinal in 1600 or 1700 and something—it is so long ago that I do not remember the exact date—a clock with chimes, music and moving figures that excited the admiration of all the neighboring towns.

From Vesoul, Chaumont, Nancy, and even Strasburg, from the four cardinal points, in fact, flocked inquisitive men and women, who, at the approach of midday, crowded into the back shop of old Master Tiphaine, the ingenious constructor of this complicated machine. Master Tiphaine had never consented to part with his masterpiece; to the offers of honors and money, a hundred times repeated, he gave formal refusals, saying:

"My native town will inherit it after my death. If you took away my clock now you would kill me, you see, for it is a part of my life."

Master Tiphaine did not exaggerate; for long years, absorbed in the most impossible calculations, he had conceived and thought out his plan of mechanism; in fact, it took ten years before his project was realized. He made all the pieces himself, and fitted them together patiently after a thousand fruitless trials—oh, how many sleepless nights, how many hidden discouragements!—he attained finally the certainty of triumph. Indeed, Master Tiphaine did not exaggerate in claiming that this clock was a part of his life.

One day, then, the inhabitants of Epinal learned that the old clockmaker had solved his problem, and that they were summoned to assure themselves of the perfect working of the apparatus.

They took care not to miss the appointment. They admired very much the construction of the machine, but when at the stroke of twelve the mechanism set in motion the figures, men-at-arms, heralds, apostles, etc.; when the chimes rang, mys-

* Translated by P. P. Mazÿck, from the French, for Short Stories.

terious bells played a popular air, the cock crowed, the ox belled, the ass began to bray, and the fat goose to utter his hoarse cry—due, as every one knows, to a cold contracted by an ancestor on Christmas night—there was a wild admiration, an irresistible enthusiasm among the spectators.

"Once more!" they called out.

"I cannot oblige you," replied Master Tiphaine, "the machinery is arranged to work only every twenty-four hours. If I disturb the least thing the whole is deranged, and I am too old to recommence such labors. Come back to-morrow!"

On the next day the sightseers came in still greater numbers. Then the news spread, reached the country and the neighboring towns. Every day the back shop was filled with admirers who were untiring in applauding the masterpiece of Severien Tiphaine.

But for some years Master Tiphaine had remained indifferent to the sincerest and the loudest praises. In the confused din of exclamations he listened only to the laugh of a child, a clear laugh, joyous and fresh as the chant of a mountain cascade, purer and more melodious than the mysterious bells that sang in the clock. Among all the faces that bent towards him gaping with surprise, Tiphaine observed only the pink and white cheeks of Guillemine, a pretty little child of five years of age, his granddaughter.

Guillemine did not miss one of the midday representations. Master Tiphaine installed her in the first row, then he raised the curtain that protected his clock. From this moment all his attention was directed to his granddaughter. With as much impatience as the child he counted the tickings, he awaited the preliminary clicks. Immovable, in a state of ecstasy, Guillemine fixed her wide opened blue eyes on the clock.

Click! click! f-r-r-ou! Gearings, springs, cogwheels began to move with a noise like the flapping of wings.

Master Tiphaine read on Guillemine's face the emotions that pervaded it, and he felt a childish joy.

Coo-coo-ricoo! the cock arose on the top of the belfry.

Guillemine clasped her hands. The bells tingled, and the infant Saviour, lying in the manger, appeared. There was the ox, the ass, and the fat goose. Higher up angels hovered in the clouds, which the dove, carrying the olive branch, flew across. The magi, the shepherds, followed by their bleating flocks, filed by in procession. Guillemine began to fidget on

her stool; she bit her lips, pulled her fingers; Master Tiphaine himself is restless; like the little girl he is awaiting the surprise.

There it is! The temptation of St. Anthony! The imps which dance about and the friend that gambols, cavorts unceasingly. That was the surprise that Guillemine was waiting for. Wild with joy she jumped about, clapped her hands and laughed. Ah, this laugh! That was the surprise that Master Tiphaine waited for.

The old grandfather laughed in his turn; he laughed until he was ready to weep, and the procession ended as the cock rising again closed the entertainment with a crowning coo-coo-ricoo! Master Tiphaine seized the little girl, shaking with laughter, clasped her in his arms and mingled his snowy locks with the blonde ringlets of Guillemine.

One cold day in December the sightseers of Epinal who, in spite of the cold, came to the shop of the master clockmaker as punctually as certain citizens of Paris, not long ago, used to go to the Palais Royal to regulate their watches by the report of the cannon, found the door obstructed by old Severien Tiphaine.

"No one can come in to-day," said he, sadly.

"Why?" they asked. "Is the clock broken?"

"The clock is not broken," replied Tiphaine in a still sadder tone; "but Guillemine is sick, poor little one, and we are expecting the doctor, who ought to be here soon; so then I ask you please to go away without noise."

They acceded to his request, made their excuses and withdrew. Master Tiphaine then entered a room with closed shutters, lit up by a few burning fagots. At the end of this room in an alcove, where the fantastic shadows danced about, there was a white bed, and in that white bed, quite pale and delicate, Guillemine was lying. At the foot of the bed a young man and a young woman were standing, looking sadly at the little girl. Master Tiphaine advanced with soft steps, trying to prevent the floor from creaking under his weight, and when he was quite near the bed he said, addressing the young man:

"Well, my son, has she spoken?"

"No; she has not. She does not seem to hear when she is spoken to, and yet she looks at us with her beautiful blue eyes."

"Father," said the young woman, "I am frightened, for our Guillemine is like a dead person, lying with the eyes wide open."

Master Tiphaine bent over the couch, and trying to smile.

"Guillemine," said he, "little Guillemine."

The prostrate child fixed on him eyes that seemed to see no longer. She did not stir.

"God have pity on us!" sighed Master Tiphaine, drawing aside.

Poor, gentle Guillemine! On the previous day, a little after the midday representation, a high fever had seized her. During a part of the night she had been delirious, crying out and struggling against invisible beings, and since morning she had remained in this state of alarming torpor, her limbs stiffened, her eyes staring. Master Tiphaine looked at the lips of Guillemine, those poor, pale lips, from which only yesterday the melody of laughter escaped.

There was a knock at the door. Tiphaine went to lift the latch. An old man entered.

"Guillemine," said Master Tiphaine, "here is the doctor, who has come to pay you a visit."

The doctor examined the child and meditated a long time.

"Well," said Master Tiphaine.

The doctor shook his head with an anxious air.

"It is serious, very serious," he said.

The young man hearing these words made a sign to the young woman, and went out.

"What is to be done?" asked Tiphaine.

"Above all, she must be roused from this fatal torpor. It is this prostration that makes me uneasy. Now, then, try to divert her, rouse her up, otherwise I can answer for nothing."

Thereupon the doctor went away. Then the young woman sat down near Guillemine and, repressing her sobs, sang an old roundelay that used to please the child; but Guillemine's eyes showed that she did not hear.

"What is to be done? What is to be done?" sobbed the young woman, and she began her song again. Hours passed, Guillemine became more and more pale on the white pillows. Afflicted, hopeless, Tiphaine, the young man and the young woman became silent now, and all was still in the room. Suddenly a rythmical noise was heard.

Tick, tock, tick, tock!

Master Tiphaine knit his eyebrows, and relapsed into a profound meditation. Abruptly he arose and went towards his son.

"Help me to roll Guillemine's bed up in front of the clock," said he.

"What do you want to do?" asked the young man.

"You will see."

They rolled the bed into the back shop, and placed it before the clock. Master Tiphaine raised the curtain that covered his masterpiece. The clock appeared. Guillemine's eyes seemed to move.

"Look closely now, Guillemine! You are going to see the manger and the wise kings and St. Anthony. . . . How you are going to laugh!"

"But, father," said the young man, "it is eleven o'clock at night, and the figures will not appear until noon to-morrow. Can Guillemine wait until then?"

"She shall not wait," replied Master Tiphaine, in a low tone, "and the figures are going to appear."

"But," said the young man, turning pale, "you can only bring about such a result by breaking up the mechanism."

"Yes, that is true."

"Father, this is your life work——"

Master Tiphaine motioned to his son to be silent.

"Bring me a light," he said.

He then drew out nails, screws, plates, laying bare the systems of wheels, etc. Tiphaine worked slowly, for his hands trembled a little.

"Give me the hammer," he said, suddenly.

Armed with the hammer he was about to strike a blow, then stopped. Was he hesitating? He looked at Guillemine, who was staring fixedly at the clock.

"Pay attention, my Guillemine. Now you are going to laugh. You will laugh, won't you?"

He struck a sharp blow. The machine seemed to groan. The spring unbent with a formidable humming, the gearings rolled around. Master Tiphaine threw the hammer far from him, and staggering, had to lean against the wall.

"Light up the clock now," said he to his son, "and look, my Guillemine!"

The hands turned wildly. There came the cock, the men-at-arms, there was the ox, the hoarse fat goose, and the bells tingled and the chimes rang out.

Guillemine had raised her head, her lips partly opened as if in hesitating prelude to laughter. Ah, there is St. Anthony,

who, quicker than ever, runs along, dragged by his friend with extraordinary gambolings, and the imps, and St. Anthony and the Wise Men and the shepherds danced a frantic round to the hurrying sounds of the chimes and the bells.

At last the hesitating laugh of Guillemine rose by degrees, ascending like a song of reviving life, and finally breaking forth clear and radiant.

But while she, the gentle little girl, was thus reviving to new life, the poor clock was in its last agony. Sinister cracking, like a death rattle, from which Master Tiphane suffered horribly, shook its frame.

In order not to hear these final moans Tiphaine listened to the laughter of the child. Once more a prolonged cracking, a last effort of the machinery, and then all was over; the clock lived no longer; but Guillemine was laughing still. . . . And so, when this famous clock was shown some years ago at Epinal, it was said—on the authority of competent persons who had studied the mutilated mechanism—that the masterpiece of Severien Tiphaine was a failure and had never worked.





THE LAST JOURNEY OF EENATH*

BY CHARLES MILTON BUCHANAN.

This story, "The Last Journey of Eenath," is supplementary to the "Potlatch of Pulkode," which appeared in the November, 1898, issue of *SHORT STORIES*. Pulkode, a chieftain and the father of Eenath, gives a great potlatch with a view to increasing his power and influence. Among the neighboring chieftains who come to the potlatch is Tssultud, the father of Sub-oh-lit-zah. Eenath becomes enamored with Sub-oh-lit-zah, makes a public declaration of his love, and is slain in the very midst of the mirth and feasting by Stabill, a jealous tribesman of Tssultud, who does not hesitate to do this injury to the hospitality of Pulkode. The murderer escapes before he can be apprehended. The guests silently withdraw and leave the old man alone with his dead son. It is here that "The Last Journey of Eenath" takes up the thread of the story.

YESTERDAY's sun had sunk upon sport and pleasure, and the night had redoubled the delights of the day. But darkness had come now alike upon the world and upon the heart of the bereaved father, for sudden death had come to Eenath. The long, black night seemed to endure to an eternity ere its blackness began to fade to a gray, the gray to gold and the gold in turn to crimson, and that at last to all the glory of a perfect sunrise.

To Pulkode it meant but the dawn of a day of desolation, for where could be joy to him without Eenath, the child of his heart and the hope of his old age? The fugitive rays filtered through the chinks of the walls and showed to him a supine, shapeless mass of dark—it was Eenath! Yesterday, but one short, short day, he had been so full of the joy of youth, so strong, so proud, so wildly happy, so delirious with love, so effervescent with life and the animal joy of life!

* Written for *Short Stories*.

This was his Eenath of yesterday. And to-day? Oh, what need of reply with that shapeless form at his very feet!

The daylight grew brighter and the potlatch house of Pulkode began to lose much of its gloomy shadow within. Night was the time for sleeping. Day meant renewed activity, a rising to new tasks, to the chase, to the wars, and even to love it might be. But to none of these would Eenath rise again. His slumbers were deep. He lay very still. The warm light played lovingly in the footprints of that last fond smile which his rigid lips yet wore, just as they had when they smiled upon the unexpected death. The warm rays caressed him lovingly, as though to woo him back to light and life. Still he stirred not. Ahd-de-dah! Heavy is grief, but heavier is the heart of the greivous! Ahd-de-dah! And heavier still is the woe that sits brooding upon the heart of a father who hath lost his only begotten son—his hope—his future—his all! Ahd-de-dah!

The old women of the household came in with many cries and lamentations, and with many tellings of his virtues, for savagery and civilization alike know nothing of the dead save what it is good to remember. The hair of the women streamed unkempt and loose and the marks of many furrows left by tears were yet fresh upon the aged, seamed cheeks. One among them, and she was the mother of the dead youth, had cut off her hair entirely as a token of the intensity of her grief. Tenderly they bathed the body of the young warrior, and with much weeping and ululation they decked him out in his finest array. Again was he the young brave with weapon in hand, about to go forth to meet the enemy of his people it might be. And let him who should chance to wake the sleeping bear beware! But the trickery and trumpery of war ill suited the smile which yet lingered about his face, and which the hideous daubings of ochre could not cover. That smile spoke of peace, of love ineffable; it had nothing to do with war. It was born in a moment when the heart yearned for Sub-oh-lit-zah and a pity for all mankind that none save he might have her. Ahd-de-dah!

When the last offices had been done the dead, the old women added anew their lamentations to the growing chorus of grief. But in it all not once appeared the name of the dead youth, for that, too, had died with him. None dared call it lest he disturb the slumbers of the dead and be cursed forevermore.

Small need was there to send messengers to the adjoining

tribesmen to summon them to the funeral of the son of a chief, for they were already present. Though they had come for a feast they must join in a burial—a burial where the potlatch had come before the death, for Pulkode had beggared himself by princely gifts and had absolutely nothing left to give. For with a potlatch the greater the wealth the greater the giving till the inevitable end is reached in absolute bankruptcy.

Tssultud and his followers had withdrawn lest the sight of his people might remind Pulkode of the false Stabill, and thus tear anew the grievous wound. Sub-oh-lit-zah would not leave with her father, but groveled in grief, shorn of her beautiful black tresses that had been her pride. Her beautiful face was streaked with splotches of ochre. What were charms to her now if they could not draw Eenath to her side? Why should she be beautiful if he was not here to whisper it in her ear? Alas! there could be no more love now since the lover had gone forever from her. Ahd-de-dah!

The son of a chief should have a chief's burial, and none there should ever forget the death and the burial of Eenath. The finest war canoes were brought up from the beach. The most skilful weavers were set to work to weave from the tender inner leaves of the rush such mats that the dead might rest upon them in peace. The great war bow, the hunting bow, the bundles of arrows, all were brought together with what other things he had used in his daily life. Would he not need them in the sky "ueswahtihutid" whereto he was faring on his last journey? So also they brought his favorite dog and his fleetest pony that the son of a chief might go into the other world as such. Let the best be his and in that day yet to come when his tribesmen should chance to meet him in the land of the dead, there will be no cause for shame should one chance to say: "There walks Eenath, he that was the son of Pulkode in that other world whence we came!" Let him go in such manner that the Sdohobsch, who were ever a proud people, might be proud of the son of Pulkode in that day. And everything was brought as has been spoken.

It was a vast procession of weeping ones that followed the youth to his last resting place, and in all that throng there was not one eye but what was wet with briny tears, and not one heart but what it was heavy with grief. As they moved through the wood the sympathetic spirit of the wind breathed upon the mystic pipes of the forest a sorrowful requiem. The

child of Nature was returning to the bosom of the great Mother, and the Mother was sad, for the hearts of those left here behind. The tall, gaunt firs murmur softly, and the cedars also, for well they knew the youth. The stout and hardy yew trees nod together and seem to whisper tales of past prowess of the mighty chiefs of departed days, but all of whom came at last to this end. See, how many there are! And how peacefully they slumber in this city of the dead. Proud indeed are the loyal yews that their leafy arms gave of their very sinews and furnished the dusky warrior the materials wherewith he won his way to fame and glory. Grim and gory were the stories they could tell.

The place of the dead looks to the west. When the day is done and the sun is sinking at last behind the jagged line of the horizon, a long, narrow finger of sand points out across the gleaming, restless waters to a golden pathway that leads on and on and on to the very portals of the land of the happy hunting grounds. The surf leaps up and dashes wildly in, dying in streamers of salty spume high upon the shingle. The eye lingers long upon the verdant richness. Afar the ever-faithful Olympics keep their everlasting vigils, like trooping white friars bending to their orisons. Grim and supernatural sentinels are they, ever guarding the slumbers of these children of the forest, and sad are the sights which they have looked upon.

Here, beside us, stand the hoary giants of the forest, and here they will continue to stand, for none may desecrate the city of the dead, lest the curse of the departed rest upon him. To the beloved dead, borne to his last resting place, they spread wide their welcoming arms. Over the grief-stricken hearts left behind they bend in benisons of sympathetic peace and quietude.

There stands the light scaffolding upon which must rest the war canoe containing the body of Eenath. And when this had been done, and when tender hands had placed the beloved clay in the fine mats of rush that had been woven for the dead, they placed over him for shelter his inverted hunting canoe—then mats and blankets. Then his swiftest pony met death at their hands that it might go into the other world with his master. Into the great war canoe with Eenath were placed rifles, bows, arrows, pipes, tomahawks, and everything that he loved. So in mighty state, as became the son of a chief of the Sdohobsch,

Eenath joined that vast flotilla of the dead that fared eternally over the waters of an invisible sea to an invisible haven. What a wondrous sight this fleet of the dead each craft with its cargo of lifeless flesh bound upon that last, long voyage to the other shore! The breezes blew softly, but no sail bellied to the blast and no paddle dipped the liquid ether. Yet no doubt at last each would fare unto his haven and the flotilla of the dead would sail the sea of eternity no longer.

So sleeps Eenath in his last, long sleep, among his people, among his friends, among his kindred.

The winds die low to a whisper. After comes the distant dashing as of surf upon sand. The sun sinks down and the great moon comes up. Here all is peace and quiet and rest. It is as it should be.



THE MAN IN THE TREE*

BY SEWELL FORD.



THE man in the tree was thinking.

Way off under a sunny sky was a squalid hut on a hillside. There were orange trees around the hut, and in the distance were long stretches of vineyards, where men and women once sang as they worked. Now the women were working alone save for the presence of a few half-grown youths and crippled old men. And the women did not sing as they worked. They wept sometimes, but more often they looked silently and wonderingly off into the west, where the skyline was broken by the crumbling bastions of a ruined castle. Off beyond the castle was the sea and beyond the sea was—they knew not what. Strange lands where men and youths went to come back no more.

This was the picture that came to the mind of the man in the tree.

But one cannot sit with a cramped leg and dream of distant things for long. So the man in the tree moved and the picture under the sunny sky gave place to another, which was more immediate and more distinct.

Spreading out before him and underneath was a wooded valley, with a hill beyond. Down into this valley a hundred yards to the right dipped a trail. Yesterday it had been a mere mule path half closed by underbrush, but now it was clearly defined. The bushes had been broken off, bent over and pushed aside, while the tramp of many feet had ground to powder the weeds and grass.

At a distance of perhaps half a mile beyond and below him the trail traversed an open space. As he looked at this opening in the screen of green he saw figures crossing it. They

*Written for Short Stories.

stood out sharp and distinct in the bright sunlight. They were men with guns. Few of them wore coats. Many of them were bare from the waist up. Their faces were dark, almost black at that distance, but their chests were white. What fine targets they made, those white chests!

The man in the tree picked up the slim barreled rifle which had been resting across his bent knees. He raised the sight-slide and squinted through it until he could see the steel pick on the end of the barrel outlined against the white flesh of a figure in the sunlighted gap of the trail. A little tongue of flame darted from the muzzle of the rifle. One of the figures in the green frame stumbled and fell.

The man in the tree laughed softly and patted the stock of his rifle.

Still the men with guns streamed along the trail. Aha! they are running. They will soon begin to run the other way. Just wait until the trenches get the range. A white back makes as fine a target as a white chest.

But hour after hour passed and the human current did not ebb. Were they hours or only minutes? What was happening up on the hillside? The man in the tree turned to see. Far up behind him on the crest was a square hut, with a thatched roof. It looked like a dovecote, but it was not. It was a block-house. What was taking place there he could only guess. He saw an irregular line of dark figures scrambling up the hill, some of them falling to rise no more. Why did not the rest go back? Now they swarmed about the building. How their guns smoked!

"Carajo!" The red and yellow flag is down.

Then the man in the tree looked into the heart of things and saw his fate. These half-naked pigs who fought like devils, they would not be driven back. He was cut off. To the right to the left, in front, behind—they were there, these men with guns who fired and ran forward, and fired and ran forward again.

The picture of the far-away hut on the hillside, the women and the vineyards came once more, and the man in the tree bowed his head and wept.

It passed. He looked again down the hillside. Not alone on the trail, but in many other places the figures moved now.

The man in the tree tightened the strap which passed under his arms and around the tree. He fitted the rifle stock to his

shoulder and peered out under the leaves. There was a big fellow with something red sewed to his shirt sleeve. Probably an officer. S-r-r-r! That must have gone too high. S-r-r-r! Just a little to the left. S-r-r-r! That went true. He's down. Very busy was the man in the tree.

Not too busy, however, to note the approach of a little squad of men who stopped and looked up into the trees, and now and then fired into the dense foliage of the branches.

The man in the tree laid his rifle carefully across his knees and reached into the leaves above him. He brought down a gourd water bottle, held it to his ear and shook it. From the pocket of his blue and white cotton blouse he fished out a piece of dry black bread. His meal ended, he threw the empty gourd from him and began to count the cartridge clips still remaining in his hat.

"Uno, dos, tres, cuatro—Christi!"

Only twenty more shots and then—why, then the war would be at an end for the man in the tree. It remained but to die. Think you good St. José, who watches over the vineyard folk at home, heard that prayer, or did the guns make too much noise?

On came the squad. The leader was tall and fair. He wore a blue shirt with chevrons on the sleeves, and a stripe which had once been white, down the outer trousers seam. He was making straight for the tree in which sat the man with the rifle. At a distance of one hundred feet the man in the tree had brought the pick on the end of his rifle down so that its top just reached the space between the blue eyes of the man on foot. His last shot should be a fancy one.

Two of the squad eyed a tree to the right, but the rest pressed on behind their leader.

"At the third step I will fire," decided the man in the tree.

At the second step the officer halted. A thick bush, with briars, was in his way. He could see over it and peered curiously into the branches of the tree.

"I believe that's where he is," said he. "The shots seemed to come straight from this direction."

"No; it was farther to the left," said a man behind him. "That's the one, that tree over there."

"Let's try a shot or two, anyway," said a second.

"What senseless chatter," thought the man in the tree.

"No; it's a waste of lead," said the officer. "Dave was right.

It must have been the other one. Come on." He stepped back from the bush and started towards the left.

As he moved off the man in the tree followed him through the sights. He had moved half a dozen paces before the rifle sputtered. The tall fair man pitched heavily forward.

"He was there, blasted coward!" said one of the squad. The others said nothing. They were shooting.

"Why don't he drop—curse him?" muttered a soldier after a score of shots had raked the branches.

For answer they saw a rifle slide down, strike a branch and bound off to the ground. The strap was doing its work.

Two women sat dry-eyed, heartbroken and comfortless. One was by a window against which beat the cold rain of October. The skies wept for her. The other stared out over sun-kissed vineyards, where the leaves were yellow and brown.

"He will come no more," said the first.

"Ay! El no viene mas," said the other, meaning about the same.





THE BIRTHDAY PEARL*

BY JOHN ARTHUR BARRY.

“IT’S my birthday,” said Bob Panton, master and owner of the pearl-shell lugger *Daisy*, then lying at anchor off Somerset on her return from a trip about Torres Straits. “It’s my birthday,” repeated he, bringing out a “square-face” of Hollands. “We’ll have a nip all round, and then we’ll open a shell each, just for fun, and to see what sort of luck I’m to have this next year.”

The five blacks and the one other white man that constituted the *Daisy*’s crew duly drank the skipper’s health in half-pints; and then, laughing, each man chose the biggest oyster he could find—all about the size of soup-plates.

Four were blanks, and they all watched Abdallah, the new hand, as he slowly opened the great bivalve. Then came a shout as he presently held up a pearl, pear-shaped, and almost as big as a hazel-nut, the finest gem on record yet found in those seas.

“Good luck indeed!” quoth Bob Panton as the chorus of admiration subsided, and, pulling out a bundle of ten dirty one-pound notes, he handed them over to Abdallah, saying:

“Take these for yourself, lad. I’ll double it if this turns out as *AI* as it looks.”

“And now I’ll get up another square-face, and we’ll wet the little stranger properly, and christen it the ‘Birthday Pearl.’ And they did so to such purpose that, bar Abdallah, there was no sober man on the *Daisy* by eight bells that night.

In the morning when Captain Bob Panton came on deck

* From Chambers’s Journal.

Abdallah was missing. So, as presently discovered, was the big pearl that Panton had left in a small wooden box in his birth. So was the Daisy's dingy that had been towing astern.

Bob Panton sold his shell, and offered a reward of £50 for the thief. But, though all the southern police were put on the "qui vive," nothing could be heard of the Birthday Pearl nor of Abdallah. And at last there were people found who did not scruple to hint at birthday hallucinations, born of "square gin," on the part of Captain Bob and his crew.

But Panton took the matter to heart, and got on a spree; spent his shell-money and more; sold his boat, pulled himself together, and started off in pursuit of Abdallah, with ever before his vision the virgin sheen of the great pearl, his for a few hours only, convinced that until he recovered it luck for him, either in this world or the next, was out of the question.

When old widower Wilhelm Itzig, the watchmaker and jeweler at Port Leichardt, died, his native-born son, Herman, came home from a wandering life of droving and working upon stations, and, returning to the trade he had been taught, mended the Leichardt clocks and watches with an indifferent measure of success, being at best but a botch.

The little shanty, dignified with the title of shop, stood apart from the rest of the township, and quite close to the beach. And but for an old tin sign, with upon it "Herman Itzig, working jeweler," and an old clock and three empty watch-cases in the window, there was nothing to distinguish it from any of the other straggling "humpies" that went to make up the nearly deserted Queensland seaport.

"How much, John?" Hermann was asking of a half-starved, unkempt-looking black man, a fortnight after the finding and losing of the Birthday Pearl, shining mildly now in the gloom of the stuffy little inner room of the shop by the beach.

"Won 'undreed, two 'undreed-feefeetee, sar," replied Abdallah, eyeing the gem as Hermann rolled it to and fro in the palm of his hand.

"Don't you wish you may get it, my boy," replied Hermann laughing. "Ask a thousand whilst you're about it, John. Why don't you?"

"Ver' fine pul, sar," replied Abdallah, cringing. "Some day get mooch more dan t'ousan' for 'im."

And young Hermann, although knowing little of such mat-

ters, thought, as he noted its soft lustre and flawless shape, that possibly his customer might be right.

His hand closed on the pearl. Said he: "I'll give you twenty. Haven't got another cent, anyhow"—which was the truth.

But Abdallah raised his eyes and hands to heaven in mute appeal at such an offer.

"You'll either take that or nothing," said Hermann, suddenly producing a revolver and pointing it straight at the other's head. "You stole it, you beggar; you know you did, up the coast somewhere—Thursday Island or Somerset, likely. Here, think yourself lucky to get so much." And Hermann handed over four five-pound notes.

"Take them," said he, seeing that the other made no motion, "or I'll have you up to the police barracks in a quarter less than no time!"

There was murder in Abdallah's eye. But he put out his hand

"Now clear straight out," said Hermann. "There's the Barcoo alongside the wharf. If you take my advice you'll get away in her. So long, old man!"

As he turned away, putting down the pistol, Abdallah sprang on him like a tiger, drawing his sheath-knife as he did so—for he was clad like any coasting sailor, in a suit of belted dungaree. Hermann reeled and fell, the knife descended again and again as Abdallah struck in his blind rage, and presently the body underneath him grew limp and motionless.

Rising and striking a match—for night was coming on, and the small room was nearly in darkness—Abdallah searched until he saw the Birthday Pearl lying near the bed, gleaming up at him out of a little pool of blood.

Wiping it on the blankets, also his knife, he turned and fled towards the long jetty where lay the steamship Barcoo, already clanging her second bell, a better man by twenty pounds than when he entered Leichardt that night, with a useless fortune in his pocket.

Next morning, somebody coming into the shop with a Waterbury to mend, found Hermann lying senseless and nearly dead from loss of blood. None of the wounds, however, had touched any vital part; and a month in the local hospital restored him to health again. For reasons of his own, he had professed himself unable to give any description of the as-

sassin. Illicit pearl-buyers on that coast were looked upon with great disfavor, for the reason that every inhabitant who could afford it had shares in some venture connected with the fishery—that is, the pearl-shell fleet. The pearls themselves were but a by-blow of the industry—conspicuous more by their rarity, except in the shape of almost worthless “seed,” than anything else.

But the glamor of the big gem had entered into Hermann's soul, as it had into Panton's and into Abdallah's: and presently, selling out his stock for a few pounds, he, too, moved on in pursuit, impelled, to boot, by a sharp feeling of revenge for loss of blood and money.

Meanwhile Abdallah, journeying southward, made no more attempts to dispose of his treasure. But, sewing it in a little bag of black calico, he hid it away artistically in the meshes of his thick hair, where with a touch he could assure himself of its safety. He was a man who had traveled far, and knew many things—knew more than Panton or Itzig; but travel had not shut out inherent superstition. And he began to look upon the big pearl as a charm, an amulet, that, worn always, would protect him and bring him much good fortune. At various times, in the absence of any distinguishing marks of caste or dress, he had been taken for a Malay, a Hindu, and a Kanaka.

But Abdallah was none of these. He was an Arab from Muscat, who had in his time worked among the rotting oyster-heaps of El Bouruk on the shores of the Persian Gulf, had seen big pearls, and possessed a fair notion of their value. Hence he was well aware that he had a prize that would make a sensation in the world, and one whose owner would be unable to hide his light under a bushel—so far as the police, at least, were concerned.

Nor did he imagine for a moment that Panton would sit down quietly under his loss. Of Hermann he thought no more—dead men tell no tales.

So he traveled round to Adelaide, thence by sea up Spencer's Gulf to Port Augusta, where he joined the camel-trains of Hafiz Khan, the rich Afghan who brought the wool down from the arid interior to the tall ships lying in the river.

Into Sydney shortly came Hermann Itzig, with the desire for vengeance still hot, but purse low. His guarded inquiries soon let him into the knowledge that the police were on the

watch, and had at least twenty men shadowed on suspicion, and waiting the arrival of Panton.

Seeing that so far as his own claim was concerned the case was hopeless, he gave it up. But not until he had satisfied himself that Abdallah was not in the city did he for a time relinquish the hope of getting even with him for that little matter of the knifing in the hut by the Leichardt beach.

Later, falling in with two of his countrymen bound for the West Australian gold fields, he joined them. The trio were lucky, and made each a fair pile. After a hurried visit to the Fatherland, which he left also hurriedly, convinced that for the Australian-born a military despotism was a most unsuitable form of government, Hermann Itzig, returning, bought a station "up north" in South Australia, and after a while began to prosper considerably. But often to him came dreams of the big pearl, shining with its mild and tender light as he had last seen it—an episode in his life that, but for certain pains of frosty mornings, he might have almost come to regard as apocryphal. A stern, resolute man, he was incapable of forgetting an injury; and ever and anon, principally in the winter, he sent agents to work to hunt up Abdallah, meaning, when found, to deal with him after his own fashion.

But when a black man, or a yellow, chooses to hide himself among others of his color, the search is apt to linger and become monotonous.

And so Bob Panton found it.

Received by the police with open arms and a whole tribe of dusky nomads—Manila-men, Kanakas, Javanese, men from the spurs of the Hindu Kush, others from the palm groves of Kandy and the plains of Central India—he could identify none of them. The police had done their best, stimulated by the reward. But the vagueness of the description baffled them. There were so many black men with sharp aquiline features and good teeth, who spoke very little English, and usually wore European clothes. And at last they gave it up as a bad job. So also did the authorities in Melbourne and Adelaide, whither Bob Panton journeyed on his quest, with hopes growing weaker and weaker.

Superstitious in his way as Abdallah, he had quite made up his mind that unless he recovered his Birthday Pearl, no luck would ever again cross his path in this world, nor possibly in the next; and, strong in his belief, he spent every penny

Close to the door lay another corpse—that of a man—a man with strips of dry black flesh hanging from his bones.

“Great heaven!” exclaimed Itzig, “what’s the matter here?” But Panton made no answer. He was staring intently at the shriveled features of the dead man. As he gazed he saw something shine from between the skeleton fingers of one clenched hand. Stooping, he drew out with a cry the great pearl, Abdallah’s god, appealed to in vain during his last agony.

“My pearl!” exclaimed Hermann.

“No—mine!” said Panton. “My Birthday Pearl that Abdallah here stole from me!”

“Are you Panton, then?” asked Hermann.

“Yes,” replied Bob, “I am. But what do you know about the matter?”

Then Hermann told his story, waiving all rights, if any belonged by reason of the wounds that ached yet in winter. He could afford to. But what had killed man and horses?

There was a little water left in the bottom of the well-bucket. Hermann tasted it, shook his head, and spat it out. Alongside the bucket lay a native cat, dead. At the troughs, dry now, were others; also crows, all dead.

“I prefer our own water,” said he. “Empty the whisky out of that bottle in the buggy, and fill it from the well. I’ll fix this stuff up when we get home. That pearl’s worth a lot of money. A good day’s work for you. And for me, too, perhaps, if my notion turns out correct. Copper’s not so low as it was.”

Analysis disclosed the secret. The well had been bottomed on a very rich vein of copper ore. The water had become so impregnated with the mineral as to become highly poisonous. A thirsty man and thirsty horses might as well have drunk a strong decoction of arsenic.

It required a deal of persuasion to make Panton part with his pearl. Even as Abdallah, he was minded to make a fetish of the thing—it was so pure-looking, and shone with such a mild graciousness, that it seemed very hard to relinquish possession of it.

But at last wiser counsels prevailed. Messrs. Storr & Mortimer gave £2,500 for it, and with this money Panton bought a partnership in Weetah. And what eventually became of the Birthday Pearl I know not. I note, however, that at the last London wool sales Messrs. Itzig & Panton’s clip averaged the top prices of the season.

THE SISTERS WITH GLASS HEARTS*

By RICHARD LEANDER.



IN this queer world of ours there are people with glass hearts. If you touch them softly they ring like silver bells, but if you knock against them they break. Once upon a time there was a king who had three daughters, all three of whom had glass hearts.

"Children," said the queen, their mother, "be careful with your hearts, they are very fragile!"

In spite of all their care the eldest princess one day leaned out the window over the sill and looked down into the garden, where the bees and butterflies flew around the flowers. Kling! came a sudden sound, as of something breaking. Alas! she had leaned too hard against the sill, and she fell down—dead!

A few weeks later the second princess drank a cup of very hot coffee. Again was heard that fatal sound as of glass breaking, and the unhappy princess fell to the ground. Her mother picked her up, and to her delight found that she was not dead. Her heart had gotten a decided crack, but it still held together.

"What shall we do with our daughter?" cried the king. "Her heart is broken, and although it is now but a little crack, it may easily break to pieces. We must be very careful of her."



* Translated by Sabina Epping, from the German, for Short Stories.
Illustrations by Helen Maitland Armstrong.

"Never fear," spoke up the princess, with a sweet smile at the anxious parents. "Oftentimes the things that are cracked last longest of all."

Meanwhile the youngest princess had grown up and was very beautiful, clever and good, and many princes from all



countries came to see her, and desired to marry her. But the old king was very cautious. To all he said:

"I have only one daughter who is perfectly well, and she has a glass heart. If I give her to any man he must be a glazier as well as a king, that he may understand just how to handle such delicate ware."

All turned sadly away, for among them all there was not one who was a glazier.

One evening the young princess, exhausted by a dance, threw herself down at the foot of her father's throne. He looked lovingly at the beautiful flushed face, and drew one of the little white hands into his.

"If I were a young prince I'd run away with you," he said in a whisper.

"So would I," came "sotto voce" from some one passing.

"Who spoke?" sternly asked the king.

Now there was no one near but a young page, who had almost finished his time of service at the castle. After he should have carried the princess' train three times more he would be



a knight. Then the king would congratulate him, thank him for his services, and send him forth knighted. When this day arrived the princess stood at the garden gate and said to him:

"You have served me well. Ah, if you only were a glazier and a king!"

"Will you wait for me?" he eagerly asked. "I will become both, and return to claim you, if you will promise to wait for me."

He was so encouraged by the smile she gave him that he went at once to a glazier and asked him to train him.

"Very well," answered the glazier. "But it will take four

long years. The first year you serve in my shop, the second year you learn to fill cracks with putty, the third to cut glass and put it in windows, and the fourth year you become a master."

"Can I not begin at the end?" asked the young nobleman, used to having his own way, and shrinking from the long years of learning.

But on being assured that no regular glazier was such without four years of service, the page gave in and began his training. He became a most skilful glazier, and at the end of his course all were sorry to part with him. As he left them he walked along the streets, rapt in his thoughts, puzzling over the problem of how to become a king, and gazed abstractedly at the pavement.

"For what are you hunting? What have you lost?" asked a wise-looking old man of our young nobleman.

"I have lost nothing, I thank you, sir," the young man courteously answered. "But I am hunting for a kingdom."

"If you were a glazier I could find one for you!"

"I am a glazier, master," eagerly replied the youth. "Ah, pray direct me to a kingdom."

Then the wise man told him that the king—the father of the beautiful princess with a glass heart—had found it so difficult to find a man who was both a king and a glazier, that he had changed his conditions, and now offered his daughter to any glazier who pleased the princess. But the princess was very hard to please. She dismissed all who came.

At this the nobleman smiled, recalling her promise to wait for him, and he hurried on to the palace, presented himself as a suitor, and was accepted at once. He was so careful of her delicate glass heart that it never even got a crack. As for the second sister, whose heart had cracked, he mended it so that it scarcely showed, and she lived in her sister's house and cared for her little nieces and nephews. Such an invaluable aunt as



she was! She taught them to sew and read, how to say their prayers, and how to play merry games. They always carried their Christmas secrets to her to help with, and when ill she was the first thing they cried for.

She grew to be very old, and when people wondered over it, remembering her cracked heart, she would say:

"Oftentimes what breaks in the beginning and does not go entirely to pieces, holds together particularly long."

And that is true, for my mother has a little cream jug, white, with little flowers on it, that has had a crack as long as I can remember, and still it is not broken. And since my mother has had it, many new cream jugs have been bought and broken, so many that you can hardly count them.



HELEN MAITLAND ARASTRONG



THE RED SEÑORITA.*

BY FREDERIC L. WHEELER.



IT STILL!" cried a man's imperative voice close to my ear. And then, before I had time to move or to realize what was about to happen, a hand, clutching a revolver, was thrust over my shoulder from behind. Almost instantly there was a flash, a loud report, and a bullet whizzed between the heads of the diners in the crowded café, and at the other side of the room a man pitched forward upon the table—dead!

Blinded and deafened by the shot, it was some seconds before I recovered myself enough to turn upon the murderous unknown, who had so coolly used my shoulder as a rest. The café was in an uproar. Men rushed hither and thither in confusion, or sought shelter beneath tables. But there was one man who struggled in the grasp of half a dozen waiters and guests, who succeeded in forcing him into a chair and wrestling the smoking weapon from his hand. As our eyes met I felt my heart knock loudly at my ribs, for I knew him, and I saw that he knew me.

Unexpected and thrilling as the meeting was, much as he had changed since I last saw him in the uniform of a Spanish officer, I knew I was not mistaken. I had too much reason to remember his dark, cruel face. Then, like a flash, I remembered something else, and I looked for his companion. There she sat, on the opposite side of his table, a blaze of red from head to foot—hat, dress, gloves, shoes—and her handsome, dark, impassive face looked out of its crimson setting with the seeming indifference of a sphinx. But the little red-gloved

*Written for Short Stories.

hand was clinched, and the little red-shod foot tapped the floor nervously.

I was almost stunned to see her here, in New York, and, above all, with him. But when I would have gone to her side I was forced back by the arrival of the police, and in another moment they had been hurried into a carriage and were driven rapidly away.

For some time no one was allowed to leave the café. The police were arresting witnesses. In virtue of my well-known position as a newspaper man (although I had been unattached since my return from Cuba, with shattered health), I was dismissed with a question.

"Do you know anything of this, Mr. Burton?" asked Sergeant Murphy.

"I saw the man fall. The other was behind me."

"Very good. You'll be on hand if you're wanted, of course. Too bad you're not on the 'Telephone' now. There's a good story in this."

"Looks like it," said I, as I strolled carelessly over to where the victim lay, stretched upon two chairs.

I have said I was a reporter. I have the news instinct strongly developed, and having seen those others together, I had small doubt whose body lay upon the chairs. As I elbowed my way through the crowd of phlegmatic officers and excited spectators his face was before my eyes, his name upon my lips. And I was right. All that was mortal of Manuel Garcia lay before me.

Knowing what I did of the past history of these three Cubans, who had so tragically thrust themselves once more into my life, I formed, very readily, a general idea of the causes which led up to this crime, and, as I sauntered homeward through the brisk November air, my mind was busy with thoughts of them, particularly of Colonel José Muchado, whom I hated with an intense ardor worthy of his own fiery race.

The papers next morning fairly bristled with "scare heads," and all manner of theories were advanced. I longed to be again in the thick of it, but months of fever and a Cuban prison had made all that impossible for the time. Strange to say, no one had actually seen the shot fired, the table at which Muchado sat being in a corner, and partially concealed by a large palm, which formed part of the café decoration. The

police had already established the identity of Garcia, who was known to be in New York organizing a filibustering expedition for the relief of the Cuban insurgents. Out of the mass of conflicting statements and futile guesses, I gathered the few facts which were of interest to me. Colonel Muchado refused to talk and Señorita Blanco, equally silent, was under respectful police surveillance at the home of her aunt, Señora Maria de Soto de Alvarado.

I decided to call upon the Señorita forthwith. I wished to recall the memory of certain languorous, Cuban days; to state certain facts which were lying heavy upon my heart. Do not mistake me, I was not in love with Señorita Blanco. She was quite indifferent to me. But I held Colonel Muchado beneath my heel, and—blame me if you will, when you have learned all—I was about to crush him as I would a worm. I had not sought mine enemy. He had been delivered into my hands, and I would but mete out to him his just deserts.

I found the Señorita, as I had hoped, alone, her aunt being prostrated by the shock of tragedy. As I entered the room the Señorita, still clad in that striking, red costume, rose from her chair to greet me. The excitement of the previous night was gone, and in its place she showed a lassitude no less becoming in one of her youth and beauty.

"So," she said, extending a white, little hand. "You are come. I hoped for this. You were in the café when—when——" She paused and shuddered, ending faintly, "You were in the café."

"It is because of that I am here, señorita," I answered. "I do not forget the old days at Las Cascas, nor the friendship of your father, whose memory I revere."

Tears filled her eyes, and her head drooped.

"So, you knew that he is dead?"

"I knew it, señorita."

There are those who, by virtue of certain acts of mine (trivial enough, as it seems to me), have called me brave. But as she raised her head there came into the eyes of this slight girl a look which I was glad to know was not for me. She was the personification of revenge as she stood there in a blaze of hate and beauty.

"Señor, he was murdered. Shot down in cold blood. Did they tell you that? Can you believe it? He, as kind as a mother, as gentle as a priest. Yet it is so, señor. He was

murdered, but," and her voice fell to a whisper, "he is avenged."

It seemed a thousand pities to break down the weak fabric of her seeming vengeance. But I had sought her with a stern purpose, which I meant to fulfill. In the face, however, of her tragic triumph I could not find it in my heart to be abrupt.

"Is he avenged," I asked, "by last night's work?"

"How else?" she answered. "It was he, Garcia, who gave information to the Spaniards that my father was in secret sympathy with the patriots and spent his fortune for the cause of 'Cuba libre.' It was he who caused my father's death. And why? Because he was refused my hand. In his anger he became a dastard and betrayed him. But he forgot me. He forgot——"

"Señorita," said I, interrupting her, "may I ask how you know it was Garcia who informed?"

"From Señor Muchado, who, though a Spanish officer, rode fifty miles through the night to warn my father. But he came too late. My people told me he wept with anger when he found the arrest already made, and in his wrath he let fall the name of Garcia. That was enough for me, and although Señor Muchado refused at first to tell me what he knew, why—I am a woman, señor, and he told me, you may be sure. It was from him I learned that Señor Garcia had fled to New York, fearing the vengeance of my father's friends, who were many. Together we followed and—we found him."

"You will pardon the question from an old friend. Are you Señor Muchado's wife?"

She flushed hotly at my words, but she replied:

"That is yet to be. No man might call me wife while Garcia lived. But I am the affianced of Señor Muchado."

There was an embarrassed pause. It was evident she meant to tell me no more. It was now my turn to speak, but when I thought of how much anguish it would cost her, I had almost held my peace. But I could not see her enter the fool's paradise of an alliance with Muchado. I had that to say which must find voice, and I steeled myself for the ordeal.

"Señorita," I said, "your story is incomplete. There are details which should be filled in. If you will listen to me I will supply them."

She was on the alert in an instant, as if she scented some danger.

"I do not understand you, señor," she said coldly.

"I will make myself plain," I went on, and what with pity for her and the strain I was under to keep calm, my voice sounded hard and unsympathetic. "You are not possessed, señorita, of all the facts relating to your father's death, and, pardon me, much that you believe is false."

That same dangerous look flashed into her eyes on the instant, and it became her well; so well that I knowing it must give place to more pitiful glances, could scarce proceed upon the task I had set myself to do. I paused a little to give her anger sway.

"You insult me, señor," she cried. "You insult Señor Muchado. I must beg you to leave the house."

"One moment, señorita. You can hardly believe I would be wantonly unkind to a woman in your unhappy position. By the memory of your father, I ask you to hear me. He would have desired it, I can assure you."

There was little enough of softening in her troubled face, but she made me a sign that I might proceed.

"It is a tragic story," I began, "and while I would not drag it out to unnecessary lengths, I will, if you please, touch upon some matters which are not new to you, but which lead up, with less unpleasant abruptness, to that which you do not know. I wish to soften——"

"Spare yourself, señor," she said. "I have borne much. I can bear even this forced communication. But no unnecessary details, if you please."

"When I was sent to Cuba by the 'Daily Telephone,' "I went on in my own way, for I knew better than she the shock she had to bear, "among my letters of introduction that to your father was considered of the greatest importance. By what secret agency I know not, his attitude was well known to the paper. It was to Las Casas, therefore, that I at once proceeded, and it was there I made my headquarters for months. Your father, indeed, all the household, were most kind to me, and when I fell ill of a fever, it was yourself, señorita, who nursed me."

She moved impatiently.

"It is not to compliment me that you force this interview upon me," she said.

"When you were called to Havana," I proceeded, unmoved, "by a note which afterward proved to be false, I was so far re-

covered from my fever that I could move about the house. Your father was, at that time, in a state of great anxiety. Spanish spies were very active, denunciations frequent. He grew cautious even to timidity—a weakness not strange in one of his age, and dangerous affiliations. Not knowing whom to trust, even among his intimates, he trusted me, and from his lips I learned much of the affairs both of his country and his family. It was in this way I learned, señorita, of the two men who aspired to your hand—Manuel Garcia, patriot of patriots, and Colonel Muchado, of the Spanish force.”

She fairly ground her teeth in anger, and plucked at the folds of her crimson gown.

“But in those troubled times even love must wait on duty. Garcia, too well known as an active insurgent to be desirable as an open friend, was bade to wait until the liberation of the island. Muchado, with whose cruelties the country rang, and whose zeal for Spain outstripped the bounds of common humanity, was dismissed without hope of favor.”

“I have heard enough, señor, I have heard enough!” cried the señorita, rising. “Why do you force upon me these criticisms of men, of whose qualities and motives you know nothing? Why do you torture me with useless reminiscence? Go! I beg, I command you, go!”

“Hear me out, señorita. The tale will justify me in the end. Neither of these young suitors took his dismissal calmly. There were angry words with both, but your father was firm in this, gentle as was his nature, and his decision was final. So matters stood when you were lured to Havana, that you might not witness your father’s arrest. They came upon us in the night, and we awoke to find the house surrounded, and, to give color to a story of resistance, some of the servants were slain. Neither your father’s age nor my sickness protected us from the inhumanity of these ruffians. Hurried from our rooms, half-dressed, our arms were pinioned, and we were forced to walk, with lariats about our necks, through the long night, and in the choking dust of our mounted captors.

“In vain did your father demand the respect due to his years; in vain I announced my nationality and threatened the vengeance of the United States. We were driven forward with coarse jeers and brutal laughter, urged on by blows of lariats and the flat of swords. I will not dwell upon the horrors of that journey, but when, after three days of misery, we were thrown

into prison, your father was prostrated under the weight of fatigue and insult, while I raved in the delirium of fever."

The señorita leaned a little forward as I went on. I had begun to interest her.

"During the dreadful days that followed, penned in a stifling room with a score of other prisoners, ill treated, ill fed, insulted by ribald guards, your father tended me as a mother would have done. I can never forget his gentle ministration, his calm bearing under the worst indignities, his quiet courage and cheering hope.

"Upon a day when I had lain for hours in a kind of lethargy a Spanish officer entered our filthy cell and approached your father, who had just risen from his knees beside my pallet. I saw the good man stiffen into a stern dignity of bearing, and heard his cold greeting of the smart newcomer. The latter, ordering the other prisoners to fall back to the limit of the crowded room, and judging no doubt from my appearance that the end was near, addressed your father in low tones, which were yet loud enough for me to hear each word.

"‘I find you fallen upon evil times, Señor Blanco,’ he said with a sneer. ‘I must tell you, señor, the case is desperate. Information has been lodged. Information which smells of death. You are denounced as a traitor, Señor Blanco. Do you know the danger in which you stand?’

"‘Señor,’ replied your father, gravely, ‘I am an old man. I can meet death with a smile. But these are ill words you give me. They are an insult alike to gray hairs and an honorable name.’

"‘Caramba! my friend, you take it coolly. But it is this way. You see, I am something of a power here. Do not underestimate it. At my word you are free, or—you die. I would like you to choose quickly, for the odor of this cell offends me.’”

At this juncture the señorita sprang to her feet and confronted me.

"His name! The officer's name!" she demanded fiercely.

"Señorita, be calm. The officer was none other than Señor Muchado."

"You lie!" she cried. "You lie! What is the meaning of this trickery? Are you an agent of police? A spy upon my emotions? I will have you driven from the house."

Gods! what a crimson embodiment of fury was she now. Her red dress seemed but the outer sign and emblem of the

hell within. She rushed to the door to order my ejection, but I had my back against it in a twinkling and raised a warning hand.

"Señorita, I swear to God I tell the truth. Hear me to the end. If you loved your father, hear me."

She paused at that, then fell to pacing the floor in a whirlwind of rage.

"Go on!" she cried. "I will hear you to the end. But I shall know if it be the truth you tell me. I will not be fed with lies."

"I thank you, señorita. I will waste no time. Your father wasted none on his decision.

"'Señor,' he answered, 'I will die in honor rather than live disgraced. You can offer me, I think, no terms which would not be too dear a price for my remaining fragment of life!'

"'You are a fool,' cried the other roughly. 'Your honor is but a thing of straw, easily fired, soon destroyed. I do not ask of you the worthless secrets of your ragged following. You may well be honored by my terms. Give me Ysabel and you may go to your home and to your futile plots. If not, I shall order the firing-squad for six o'clock to-morrow morning.'

"Your father was not shaken by these threats.

"'My daughter,' he said, 'is not for sale, even at the price of life, nor would I be party to any agreement which should bind her to one who has shown himself a scoundrel.'

"Muchado, in a white heat of rage, menaced the old man with his clinched fist.

"'I will give you,' he cried, 'until to-morrow at six.'

"Then seeing that I watched him he spurned me with his foot, saying, 'And this spy, if he be not carrion by then, as seems most likely, shall keep you company. A Gringo dog is fit company for a renegado ass.'

"With that and a mouthful of oaths he flung out of the room amid the curses of the prisoners."

The red señorita hung upon my words and mirrored in her face every emotion to which the tale gave rise.

"My fever increased with the night, and through all the long, sad hours your father never left my side. Never have I seen such strength of character. Forgetful of himself, he tried to ease what were not unlikely to have proved my last moments. For myself I was too weak to care what happened, and when day broke I lay barely conscious of life. True to his word Colonel Muchado entered the cell a little before six. What

was said I could not hear, but suddenly I was dragged roughly from my pallet, only to fall limp and inert upon the floor. Aroused to consciousness by the rough handling I had received, I was aware of your father speaking with grave distinctness.

"'I have nothing more to say, señor. You have my answer.'

"'To the yard then. We will soon end this folly. As for the Gringo, let him die as he lies. He is not worth a bullet.'

"I heard the tramp of the departing guard, the rattle of their accoutrements, the clang of the cell door. Then, after what seemed an interminable time, there came through the grated window the tramp of those marching feet, the thud of rifle-butts upon the pavement, the sound of orders sharply given. By a supreme effort of the will I turned upon my hands and knees, and crept towards the window, which, as I knew, overlooked the prison yard. But the window was high and I could not rise to my feet. My fellow-prisoners were moreover crowding about the grating and struggling for a sight of the tragedy without. But, noticing my futile efforts, they drew back, ashamed of their idle curiosity in the face of one whose close connection with the sorrows of that grand old man gave him rights above their own. Two of them raised me to my feet and supported me while I looked out through the grated slit, nor did the others seek to disturb me, being touched, I doubt not, by my weakness and the cruelty of the deed at which I gazed."

The señorita sat, a huddled mass of red drapery, from which her dark eyes stared, fixed and tearless.

"The firing party stood beneath the window, so near that I could almost have put forth a hand and touched them. Over against the dead wall at the other side of the yard your father faced them, erect and fearless, with bared head and shirt thrown open at the breast—a gallant sight, señorita. I shall see it while I live. Between the soldiers and their victim, Colonel Muchado paced to and fro, white as the plume of his shako. He held his watch in his hand and glanced at it nervously and often. Your father stood like a rock, in sharp contrast to the other's feverish mood.

"'You have two minutes more, señor,' Muchado called out sternly.

"Your father disdained to answer, but catching sight of my

pale face behind the bars he smiled and waved his hand. Muchado did not look up. His agitation was intense. The tiger and the cur fought within him. Again he called:

"'One minute more.'

"Still no answer. Only a moving of the lips in prayer. That last terrible minute seemed an age, but at length the colonel spoke again:

"'The time is up, Señor Blanco. Do you still refuse? Then here you die, a traitor to your country and your sovereign.'

"Following this came the short, sharp words of command, and as the order 'Fire!' fell from Muchado's lips the leveled rifles cracked and a brave man met ignoble death. While the smoke yet hung heavily in the yard Muchado walked over to the prostrate form. Whether he saw some sign of life I cannot say, but he placed his pistol close to that gray head and fired. Then with a braggart's oath, cried out:

"'So perish all the enemies of Spain!'

"I saw no more. The strain had been too great, and I fell back into the arms of my fellow-prisoners, unconscious."

The señorita, no longer an incarnate vengeance, cowered, weeping, in her chair. I went to her and touched her gently on the shoulder.

"Señorita," I said, "you once accepted the unsupported word of Colonel José Muchado in a matter of life and death. I do not ask you to accept mine on those terms. Some time during his last sad night on earth your father found means to write this brief statement, this last farewell, hoping that by some means it might come at last into your hands. Had I died, my fellow-prisoners were sworn to see it delivered, if fate permitted. But when, through the influence of the American consul I was set free, I bore the letter in my breast. Too ill to remain in Cuba I came to the United States, resolved to seek you again, when my health should be restored. Having found you here I have nothing left to do but give you this little scrap of paper on which are written your father's last words."

She took the paper mechanically, but did not open it.

"You have given me a cruel blow, señor," she said, "but I thank you. It is better so. I cannot but believe you, and I will not insult your honor by reading this paper before I tell you so. I beg of you to leave me now. I wish to be alone."

And so I left her, nor did I ever see her again, save once. and then not face to face. Receiving an offer from the "Tele-

phone" to serve as special correspondent at Victoria's Golden Jubilee, and the police considering my testimony in the Garcia murder case as of no importance, I accepted, in the hope that new scenes might expedite my cure. After completing this assignment I made a tour of the continent, and at Madrid made one of the crowd that gathered to witness the return of General Weyler. As I stood in the street among the throng a carriage drove briskly by, and in it I caught one glimpse of a face I could never forget. It was Señorita Blanco, the wreck of her former self, clad now in deepest black, and with all the old fire departed from her face. It made me inexpressibly sad, for I knew, as no one else could know, the fire that still burned within.

When I returned to New York Muchado had paid the penalty which the law exacts from murderers. Into the details of his trial, in which Señorita Blanco was the chief incriminating witness, I shall not enter. That he was a murderer my own eyes had shown me. Not, let me confess it, in that New York café, but in that earlier time when he had done to death that gallant gentleman, Señor Juan Blanco. Of the murder of Garcia he was innocent, but the silence of two persons sent him to the gallows. Señorita Blanco and I sat in judgment upon him, and rendered the silent verdict, "death."

For the voice that cried out in the café, "Sit still," was addressed, not to me, but to the Señorita Blanco, and the hand which was thrust over my shoulder for the fatal shot was small and feminine, and trimly gloved in red.



THE UNCLE OF MY NIECE*

BY MAJOR A. MOBERLY.



TELEGRAM for you, sir," said Phipson.

"Who from? Open it, can't you?" I answered impatiently, for I was struggling with the buckle at the back of my black satin stock, and my G. O. M. collar embarrassed me.

"From Brighton, sir—Lady Belinda——"

"Oh, let aunty keep till we get back again. I've enough on my mind just now. Now then—that waistcoat."

Phipson held it out, stiff, starched, and buff-colored, like Mr. Dombey's wedding-garment.

"This won't do, you know. These buttons meet too freely. I must have another bath towel on."

Phipson backed away a few feet, and took a careful view of my contour.

"No, sir, if you will excuse me. It would be a mistake. Another inch and you degenerate into low comedy. As it is, there is a touch of farce about those collars," and he sighed regretfully.

I gave in to Phipson—I always do; and was put into the blue frock coat, massive watch-chain and seals, and tall, curly-brimmed hat that completed my attire. He handed me my Malacca cane and took up a position against the further wall of the room. Then I left the room and re-entered, flinging the door wide open and stopping short on the threshold in an attitude of amazement. "How does that go, Phipson?"

"Uncommonly well, sir. Disgust and dignity is all there. Perhaps a leetle touch more consternation required. A rub to the left whisker might impart it."

I tried again.

*From "Crampton's Magazine."

"Very good indeed, sir. I was thinking if you could take an opportunity of observing Mr. Burton, Sr., sir. He has a way of puffing out his cheeks and blowing slowly that is very telling. If you could ask him to luncheon, sir, and 'orrify him a little—just as a study?"

Then Phipson went to call me a cab, and I took up the telegram.

I was accustomed to Aunt Belinda's urgent messages. Not a week passed without some commission arriving for me, either by post or wire. In the course of the last month I—or Phipson—had sent her down a pair of brougham horses, fifty selected stove palms, a bottle of a new patent hair-dye, a lady-help "with a taste for art millinery, and some knowledge of bee-keeping; one who could play the mandoline, if possible." Also, a baby doll with a phonograph attachment that nearly caused my arrest by going off unexpectedly as I handed it in at the Parcels Office.

"Make appointment with Sir William Brett directly. Ask if he can come here. If not, secure apartments, Beaumont street."

This was not the ordinary commission. A cold qualm passed over me. Not many months ago the family physician had insisted on Lady Belinda consulting a specialist about her health. Sir William Brett's opinion had not been satisfactory. He suspected grave internal mischief, but her wilful ladyship laughed him and his warnings to scorn. Phipson looked serious when I gave it him to read. "I had better go and see about this at once, sir. If it is another of them attacks, there's no time to lose."

I wished I could have gone myself. If it had been anything but a regimental performance for a regimental charity, I could have turned the part over to my under-study and taken the next train to Brighton, but I dared not risk that.

We were bringing out a piece that was to cover the authoress with glory, and the authoress was Lady Adela Wymond, our colonel's wife. This dress rehearsal was virtually a "first night," to which many influential friends of the press and the stage had received invitations.

I dared not trust McNaughton to take my place, even if there had been time for him to have dressed. I must go through with it.

"Forsworn" went off better than I, who had only seen frag-

mentary rehearsals, expected. As I came off after my great scene with Lady Adela in the second act, I found Phipson waiting at the wing with an anxious face and another telegram in his hand. I tore it open.

"Come down at once. To-night if you can," was all it contained.

"What time is the train? I don't see how I can get away before the end."

"Ten-fifty, sir. Were you thinking of going down?"

"I must"—looking at my watch—"the third act isn't long—in any case I'm only on in the first half. If you bring me some things to change into and have a cab ready, I can just do it. I must see about leave, though."

"What's the matter?" asked little Teddy Burton. "Anything I can do for you?" Teddy is the best little man going; always wanting to do something for somebody. He is the only son of an adoring father, a soap manufacturer, and belongs to our fourth battalion. "You'll find the colonel in the green-room, and, look here, if your man will bring your things to the station you can change in the train going down, eh? My cab is ordered for half-past ten. I'll drive you there."

The colonel gave me leave with some demur, and the third act commenced. I was out in all my calculations, though. The authoress had been dissatisfied with one scene, and had written up her own part in it with such liberality that I went on five minutes later than I expected. Then a stupid little bit of a song was encored, and when I came off at last I was dismayed to see how late it was. I couldn't even wait to get rid of my "make-up," as I intended.

"Jump in!" cried Teddy. "Turn up your collar and pull your hat over your eyes. You won't meet anybody you know at this time of night. I'll see you through; I told your man to take a ticket for me. Want a breath of fresh air?"

"It's awfully kind of you, Burton," I said, most sincerely, for I dreaded the lonely journey with only my anxieties for company. I had felt obliged to leave Phipson to coach McNaughton for to-morrow night, and to see after his make-up. It was the least I could do to make amends to Lady Adela.

We were only just in time. The engine gave its farewell shriek as we were hustled into the last first-class compartment, and the train moved off as the door slammed. No chance of changing there! A prim little lady and a primmer

maid occupied the two end seats. Teddy evidently impressed them favorably by his affectionate care of me whom he addressed as "Grandpapa," and treated as if in the last stage of senile decay. He subsided at last, and I dozed in my corner till awakened by the exit of our fellow-passengers at Three Bridges.

It was a wild night, and the windows were blurred by steam and raindrops. Forgetting, for a moment, my remarkable appearance, I opened the door and looked out, to make sure no further intrusion was imminent. To my disgust, two ladies made straight for the carriage, though there was room and to spare in front.

"There he is—looking out for us!" cried a high, sharp voice, and, as I dropped back into my seat, the door was tugged valiantly open, and a yellow little woman, in a smart bonnet, skipped on to the step.

"How do you do, Sir Gregory? Lucky I saw you! I've brought her myself, you see." She had absolutely grabbed my hand, and was shaking it. "Yes, here she is; and I hope and pray"—this in a raised voice, evidently intended for other ears than mine—"I trust you may meet with a better reward for your charity than others have done. Get in, Iris."

She hopped down, and shoved in her companion as the train started; and there was I, shaking in my shoes, before a tall young lady with the handsomest eyes I ever beheld, in a shabby tweed suit and a towering passion.

"I think there's some mistake——" I began mildly.

"There's no mistake! There shall be no mistake if I can help it!" she declared. "Before you speak another word to me, you shall listen to what I have to say." Her eyes fairly flashed sparks at me as she spoke.

"But really——"

"You shall hear me out! You may say what you choose after. There shall be no misapprehension as to the terms on which we stand. When Aunt Viola came to me last night—she took care to wait till I had finished the stocking darning and letting down Milly's frock—when she came and told me I was to go to you, whether I would or no, you may be sure she told me the worst; how you were taking me in from pure charity, and against your will——"

"I swear I'm doing no such thing!" I shouted. "I don't know you——"

"And whose fault is that?" she answered, with accents of scorching, scathing scorn. "You let your own sister's child go like a stray dog to the first door that opened to her, and take her back just because it suits you. Oh, I am under no deception. You can't explain away your own note to Aunt Viola. She showed it to me. It was too good a chance of humiliating me for her to lose. You wrote that 'you didn't mind putting me up for a bit if I am good-looking and can make myself agreeable.' Those were your words, don't venture to deny them!" and she threw her handsome head back and pointed an accusing forefinger, in a dingy suède glove, at me with the grand gesture of an avenging angel.

"Confound it! Will you listen?"

"Not to a word! I am good-looking and I mean to make myself agreeable"—this with a stamp of the foot—"but you shall first know why. I wouldn't have come to you—I would have made Aunt Viola keep me, whether she would or no—but for my eyes. The scarlatina has left me half blind, and the doctor says that if ever they are to get well I must rest them for a month. Do you think Aunt Viola would keep me for a month doing nothing? Not likely. That is why I am coming to you, and, if you grudge the expense, you can make Uncle Solomon repay you out of that money of mine that he has. I can't get it from him. Then I shall leave you. I can earn my living anywhere by my music."

I was relieved to see that she really had talked herself calmer, but she hadn't done yet. The consciousness of my absurd disguise daunted me. I felt obliged to hear her out. Teddy's shoulders were shaking in the corner behind his newspaper. He wasn't going to help me.

"You are an ill-tempered, exacting old man, Aunt Viola took care to tell me——"

"Oh, go on; don't spare my feelings."

"But I warn you to expect nothing—no, nothing from me. I won't read your newspapers to you, or sew for you, or write your letters, and you may scold me as much as you like, but you shan't make me cry; for the d—doctor says if I do I sh—shall g—g—go b—blind at once——"

I was so horrified at seeing her lips quiver and droop at the corners, and a mist coming into the beautiful, fiery eyes, that I threw discretion to the winds.

"For heaven's sake don't cry, then! I agree to everything

you wish. You shall have everything your own way, and——” desperately attempting a diversion—“don’t make a scene before strangers. I haven’t introduced my friend, Mr. Burton.”

She had overlooked him, and the shock of finding a spectator of our fracas cooled her down at once. She bowed with freezing magnificence, while I seized on his paper and retired behind it to gain time and seclusion for thought. Here was a situation! Who was this spit-fire beauty? And who was Sir Gregory?

And where was Sir Gregory? In the train, most probably. But how was I to find him? And if I forced an explanation at once, what would be the consequences? Hysterics, and then——! Supposing she cried and went blind on the spot! It was really an awful position. I would search the train from end to end at the next station, I resolved; conduct Sir Gregory to his niece, and then disappear forever. My blessed disguise would prevent her ever identifying me. I stole a look at her round my paper. Teddy was getting on finely. She had moved to the corner seat on a line with me and he was putting a rug round her. The shoulders of the shabby tweed coat were dark with rain drops. Teddy mopped them up with his handkerchief, presently. She didn’t fly out at him—but then, he wasn’t her uncle, Sir Gregory.

Hayward’s Heath. Out I bundled, with scant courtesy, and hurried along the whole length of the train, peering into every compartment in search of the old gentleman with scrubby, white hair, fierce eyebrows, reddish nose, and grizzled mutton-chop whiskers for whom I had been mistaken. I came upon nobody in the least resembling myself or likely to be anybody’s elderly uncle. Foreigners, smart young fellows, couples obviously married, or men of low estate. Returning baffled, I was run into by a flushed and blear-eyed youth in livery making his way back from a visit to the refreshment room.

“’Illo Gus! ’Ere y’are. Found the lidy?” shrieked a large, high-colored damsel, in a blue hat with red roses, from the window of a compartment containing a noisy party.

“Lidy be blowed; who wants her? Shpoil the party. Me and S’ Gregory’ll have ’nough of her by’nby. Look for her, Preston Park. All ri’.”

So that was the escort she had missed. She was better off with Burton and me. I made my way back and found that

Burton had conjured up a cup of tea and a bag of sandwiches, and was negotiating with a porter for a fresh hot-water tin.

"It's all right," he eagerly whispered. "You're Sir Gregory Grimshaw and she's Miss Iris Merton. I'm your secretary and you bully me awfully, you know. Stick to it, old man."

Miss Iris' fine color and spirit had vanished. She looked white and meek, and sipped her hot tea gratefully. Burton had persuaded her to take off the damp coat and put on his fur-lined overcoat. I paid no attention to them, but turned my back and pretended to sleep. What a pretty, piteous face it was when the temper had gone out of it! Burton and she conversed in whispers, out of respect for my slumbers; I could hear little suppressed laughs now and then. What were they talking about? It was uncommonly slow work for me sitting there and hearing Master Teddy amusing himself at my expense possibly. Hang him! Should I interfere and spoil his fun by telling the truth? The thought of that drunken scoundrel disposed of the notion at once. Then what was I to do? I fell asleep in earnest over the problem. When I woke I found Teddy seated opposite me. "Hush!" he said, as if I were making a row. Our charge had followed my example. "Dead beat," he murmured. "Half hysteric from cold and hunger, I fancy. Once she had had her tea she was awfully penitent for having slanged you."

"Who is she? What have you found out?"

"Father dead—clergyman. Educated her regardless of expense, and then kept her at home for company till he died, leaving her thirty pounds a year. Aunt offers her a home, pockets the money, works her as governess and general slavey, and talks of her charity all the time, till it suits her to get rid of the girl."

"But why?"

"Can only guess. Clever young doctor comes into the story somehow, when Miss Iris caught scarlatina from the children after nursing them through it. Proposed, I infer—like his impudence! Auntie wants him for her own—packs this girl off at a moment's notice, to you, her only other relation—an unmitigated old ruffian. You can't think how sorry she is for me——"

I cut the impostor short, and asked him—we were rapidly nearing Brighton—what was to be done? I think he would have slain me with his own hand had I proposed to deliver the

girl to that footman or his master. He had his plan all cut and dried. We were to take her to Brighton, and if Lady Belinda were too ill to help us, there was always her great friend, Mrs. Travers, who lived at the same boarding house and with whom Teddy was a favorite. He was sure one of them would give the girl a home till her eyes were better or something could be arranged. Teddy argued beautifully, and at such length, that we arrived at Preston Park before I had time to propose an amendment even if I had been prepared with one. "Gus," with his hat askew, lurched past our window, and I felt that we had burned our ships. Brighton at last. My niece woke with a start, and I meanly abandoned her to Teddy and fled; that is, I ordered him gruffly to "see after Miss Merton and bring the luggage," and then jumped into a hansom myself, and told the man to drive as fast as he could to 25 Collingwood Place, so as to get the needful explanations over before they should arrive.

"Peltzer's Boarding house" is kept by an ex-butler of my aunt's, who married her maid, and a set of rooms there is permanently reserved for her. Peltzer had no night porter, but I saw a light in the basement, and knocking, was opened to by Mrs. Peltzer herself, a kindly soul, with a head on her shoulders; Phipson's sister, moreover.

"We can't take in any one to-night," she said firmly. "You can try the 'Cosmopolitan' in the next street. Lawks! it's Mr. Barrington. Why, what 'ave you done to yourself, sir?"

"Never mind my looks. How's my aunt?" I demanded, pushing past her into the passage.

"Lady Belinda? She's in Paris, sir, I believe."

"Paris? Then what's the meaning of this telegram that brought me down to-night?"

She read it and looked wrathful. "That idiot, Ludwig! I gave it him myself the day before yesterday. Her ladyship wanted you to come and make up the party. She wrote as well. I'll be bound that letter is at the bottom of his pocket."

"Do you know what she meant by a message about a doctor?"

"Yes, sir. That was for a poor gentleman we have here. Her ladyship has persuaded him to go to Sir William Brett——"

I wasted no more time on investigation, but explained my own difficulties. Mrs. Travers, by ill-luck, was away, too, and

Mrs. Peltzer roundly refused to compromise the respectability of the establishment by taking us in. She might receive the young lady—for one night only—but as for Burton and me—.

Here Peltzer joined the conference. He was abased by the sense of his wrongdoings and anxious to propitiate me; also the chance of letting my aunt's rooms had awakened the greed of gain.

"I knows nodings," he protested. "Nodings but vat you tell me. Hier ist most honorable Sir Baronet Gregory Grimshaw and his high-born lady niece. We will receive zem. Vy not? Hein?" with an astute wink.

"Law, Ludwig!" grinned his spouse. "Well, Mr. Barrington; you understand we couldn't possibly take you in with a stray young lady at this time of night, but Sir Gregory and his niece are quite another thing. I trust to your honor to make it all right with my lady when she comes home." I noticed a malicious twinkle in her eye at the thoughts of keeping me in my disguise, but I was desperate by this time and would have agreed to anything.

Burton and my niece were waiting patiently enough in the cab outside all this time. I dispatched my secretary to find refuge at the "Cosmopolitan," gave over my niece to Mrs. Peltzer's charge, and followed Peltzer to my own quarters right thankfully. I forgot my perplexities in sleep.

I awoke to their remembrance next morning, though. Something in the glance Peltzer cast on me as he filled my tub made me spring from the bed to the looking-glass. That abominable make-up! Though I had gone to bed unwashed, having neither Phipson nor the materials at hand to renew it, it had come to irretrievable ruin in the night. One eyebrow was lost in the bed, and the markings round the eyes had run into shapeless smudges. My whiskers were all right, but, in the crude light of morning, the join of my bald head was made manifest. My moustache, being small and pale, had been merely gummed flat and painted out. One end had got released and stood forth, a stiff spike under my blotched pink nose—a ghastly spectacle!

And my dress! The G. O. M. collar hung lifeless and the buff waistcoat was a limp, disreputable rag. What was to be done?

I jumped into bed again, turned my face to the wall, and

swore—but that did no good. Then a bang at the door announced Teddy Burton, who flung himself into a chair and yelled with delight at the sight of me; then, finding how miserable and savage I was, set about trying to help me.

"Of course you can't come down to breakfast. I'd better tell Miss Merton you're ill——"

"But suppose—suppose she wants to come and nurse me!"

"We must keep her out of the way. See here. I don't mind if I take her out and show her the place, and—yes, we can get luncheon somewhere and that will give you time to turn round, you know."

I groaned an assent. They might go and be hanged to them.

Then I jumped up again, and sat down to write the strongest letter of recall that pen and ink could produce to Aunt Belinda. I heard the two go downstairs together, and could not resist peeping at them through the blind.

How handsome she looked in the fresh morning sunshine! Even the worn old tweed suit looked smart on her trim, young figure, though it looked chilly, too, in the sharp east wind. As for Teddy, he beamed all over with delight and importance. I cast a despairing look at the wretched, dejected figure of fun in the glass and returned to my letter. It was not an easy one to write. I was laboring at the fifth copy when a well-known discreet tap at the door made me start with incredulous delight. "Come in!" I shouted, and Phipson's welcome old face presented itself.

"The theatricals is postponed, sir. We are in mourning for His Royal Highness, as you will see by the morning papers." The Duke was a German royalty connected with our regiment in some honorary fashion. "So, as Captain McNaughton didn't require me, I judged best to come up by the early express."

His sister must have prepared him, for he took the story very quietly.

"It's awkward, sir, very awkward, especially for the young lady. We can't keep her here, and send her out with Mr. Burton all day—not if she's desirous of a situation as governess; nor, as things is, can we communicate with Sir Gregory."

"What would you recommend?" I asked, humbly.

"We must get her ladyship back at once, sir. With your

permission, I will cross by Newhaven to-night; I can take your letter, sir, and add my own explanations"—which were far more likely to prove effectual, I was well aware—"I should suggest your returning to town at once, sir, and taking Mr. Burton with you."

"But how? I must see Miss Merton and explain—and how can I in this state? And I can't go away and leave her all alone till my aunt comes."

"For the sake of the establishment and the young lady, it might be as well to continue the imposi—beg pardon, sir—substitution a few hours longer, much as we regret it," Phipson admitted, reluctantly. "I will see about the dress for the character and have a friend here, M. Alphonse, late of Covent Garden, who, I am sure, will be equal to the make-up. It need not be so exaggerated as before. I believe the young lady only saw you with a hat on?"

"She could only see the tip of my nose and my whiskers, and she was too excited to pay any attention to those," I eagerly assured him.

Phipson helped me to dress and went in search of his friend, while I plucked up a spirit and managed to dispose of some luncheon. M. Alphonse arrived in the course of the afternoon and took me in hand seriously. I was fitted with an artistic gray wig, my moustache abolished, despite my protests. "Lady Adela will be gratified," Phipson said, for my consolation. "She always thought it imperilled the piece." White eyebrows and whiskers were carefully adjusted and wrinkles and touches about the eyes painted in with the utmost delicacy and further concealed by gold spectacles. I felt I could defy detection as an undoubted, genuine old English gentleman.

Phipson insisted on rehearsing the "business" with me once or twice with anxious care, how I was to shake hands, blow my nose, lean on my cane as I rose from my chair, and take precautions against appearing too youthful about the legs.

He put me into my nice, elderly dress suit and old-fashioned cravat, and, with many injunctions as to the train and manner of my departure next morning, started for Newhaven.

I felt uncommonly pleased with myself as I stood with my back to the sitting-room fire awaiting their return, while Peltzer laid the table with furtive side-glances of admiration at me. The lights were carefully shaded—out of consideration

for my niece's eyes—and I had made Peltzer get a bouquet of roses to put in her place. I felt quite angry with Burton for keeping her out so long and meant to speak seriously to him about it. In they came at last, chattering and laughing all the way upstairs, Iris fresh and rosy, her pretty chin nestling into a big fur boa, and a smart little toque to match perched on her bright hair. She gave a little start at seeing me, then came forward, her eyes sparkling and her cheeks blushing beautifully.

"Oh, uncle, I hope you are better! Couldn't I have been of some use to you?" She had pulled off her fur gauntlets and held my veined, shaking old fist in her warm little hands.

"No, no, my darling" (that was for Burton's benefit. I patted the little hand and made him glare). "I'm glad you enjoyed yourself. Did Burton take good care of you?"

"Indeed he did! And how am I to thank you for your present? It's lovely, too lovely!" and she stroked her furs and blushed anew; Burton winking and telegraphing like a maniac behind her.

"Say nothing, my dear. Take it as a peace-offering." I declare she looked as if she were going to kiss me. I'd have let her—I couldn't have helped it—if Peltzer had not come in with a tray of glasses, and they both rushed off to dress.

It was a jovial little dinner. We were all in rather reckless spirits. Iris pinned one of my roses into the lace round the neck of her neat little black frock and after dinner sang song after song for us, Teddy playing the accompaniments while I listened behind the Times. Iris had said "good night" and Teddy departed to the "Cosmopolitan" before I remembered that nothing had been said about our approaching departure.

Need I say I did not leave Brighton as arranged, nor the next day, nor the next day, nor the next. I know it was mad and reckless, but I had missed the right moment for explanation and it never returned. Besides, Teddy was immovable. "Leave Miss Merton here alone! Out of the question. Suppose that old ruffian, Sir Gregory, were to come down and find her?" (That possibility hadn't occurred to me, and it sent cold shivers down my back to contemplate it). "It was all my tomfoolery and dressing-up that had got her into the scrape." (That was good!) "I ought to have the common decency to see her out of it," and so forth. So, emboldened by the success of Alphonse's ministrations and Iris' dim sight, I let things drift

and we drove together, and sauntered by the sea, and had cozy little dinners and merry evenings with the music of Teddy's banjo and Iris' songs. This couldn't go on; in fact it didn't; but the end came all at once, and without warning. I was beginning to feel some scruples on Teddy's account. He was young and impressionable, and I felt it to be my duty to his good old father not to let things go too far. Old Burton was a model parent, but had views of his own as to Teddy's future. I must hint as much to Iris on the first opportunity.

The opportunity came next morning. We had planned an expedition to a distant village on the Downs where "remains" were on view—Saxon, or Roman, or Ancient British—it was all one to us. Teddy had gone off on some errand of his own first, leaving us to wait for him on the pier. I was thinking how to begin when she made the first move.

"Uncle, I've something to confess to you—unless Mr. Burton has told you——"

She stopped dead short and I began to feel queer.

"You have been so dear and kind to me, in spite of the wicked, shameful way I behaved to you, that I cannot bear to vex you, and he said you would be angry——"

The hussy! What had she been doing?

"But that first day when we went out together, we went to a registry——"

"A Registrar's?" What did the girl mean?

"You don't really want me, you know, uncle dear. You have your man and Mr. Burton, and I shall only be in the way if I stay too long. So I've found a situation in a school near here. French and German conversation classes for the first term, and music when my eyes are well. It's a nice house and the pay is ever so much more than I expected. Do consent, uncle, dear!" and the witch slipped her hand into mine and pressed it ever so nicely.

Really it seemed a providential escape from our difficulties. I thought of my dwindling leave and the growing costliness of Alphonse's artistic efforts and, with a sigh, signified my approbation of the plan.

"Then you'll give me a satisfactory reference, won't you? The lady principal would like a personal interview, she says."

Here was a pitfall! I walked on faster, inwardly calling on Phipson to come and save me from the perils besetting me on either hand; then, suddenly, my footsteps were checked,

my heart stood still, and my blood was turned to water. Face to face, coming up from the sea to meet me, was my own simulacrum, white-whiskered, fierce eyebrowed, gray-haired; wearing the same, old-fashioned, olive-green great coat, the same curly-brimmed hat. The veritable Sir Gregory Grimshaw!

I caught Iris' arm and turned her sharply. "Burton will be waiting," I stammered, and walked her away as fast as I dared. Had he seen me? Was he pursuing? I did not dare to look. At the entrance to the pier our carriage was waiting, but no Burton. I handed Iris in and jumped in after, bidding the driver to start at once. I don't know what explanation I gasped out, but it was satisfactory, for Iris kept silence while I tried to grasp the awful position in which I stood. Suddenly, she turned and looked back—"Someone is following us on horseback," she said. I started as if shot. "I think—yes, I am sure—it is Mr. Burton," and she colored quite unnecessarily.

It was Teddy, curvetting and prancing on a tall, ginger-colored steed. We stopped, he danced past us and reined up with some difficulty alongside.

"I was detained by important letters, Sir Gregory," he panted, then bestowed on me a wink of ominous meaning that awakened my darkest suspicions. We could say no more then, and it was not till we arrived at the "remains," inspected them, and ordered luncheon at the little village inn, that he had a chance of telling me what had befallen him.

"We're in a hole!" he began, in an awe-struck whisper. "They're pursuing us with detectives"—if he had said "blood-hounds" his whisper could not have been more soul-curdling—"and I say, have you seen Sir Gregory?"

I nodded assent.

"Last night, you know, coming home along the King's Road, I had a fancy that a fellow in a brown hat was following me, but I couldn't be sure. I dodged back to the "Cosmopolitan," dressed for dinner, and, to be on the safe side, dodged out by the back stairs and the servants' entrance. When I got home at night, there he was, still in the hall. There was no reason why he shouldn't be there, of course, but this morning, when I came out, there he was again. I went to the postoffice for letters, and, coming back, turning a corner, I came right upon him confabulating with the most diabolical old Johnnie you ever beheld. Awfully like you, isn't he? I knew you were

on the pier, but dared not go near you to give a warning; all I could think of was to lead 'Brown Hat' a dance in the opposite direction. So I sauntered along, pretending to be looking out for somebody. I went and bought cigarettes and a paper—'Brown Hat' always after me. Then, as I passed a livery stable, I saw, by good luck, this brute standing, ready saddled; so I turned in, hired him, and rode off—not in this direction, of course. 'Brown Hat' stuck to us gamely for a bit, but saw it was no good, so, as soon as he dropped off, I made a long turn, and came on here. Now, what's to be done?"

"We can't keep on dodging forever and ever," I said, moodily, "nor can we get off and leave that poor girl to face that old brute——"

"I should think not! Why not run over to Paris—or America—or Cairo for the winter?" But here Iris entered, and the question was left open.

I sat alone in that stuffy inn parlor after luncheon, on pretext of "letters to write," beating my brains for some plan of hiding her safe somewhere, till Phipson should return to deliver us. Either I or she had been recognized, I felt certain, but not tracked home; hence the watch set upon Teddy who must have been seen with us. I was most likely the object of pursuit; Sir Gregory must have heard from Aunt Viola of his "double" to whom she had delivered her charge. It was clear that we must separate. Teddy's schemes were impossible. I couldn't take Alphonse over the world with me, nor get an extension of leave. I would restore Miss Merton to Collingwood Place, as the safest and most respectable abode, and trust to Phipson and Aunt Belinda doing their best for her; and I would throw myself to the wolves, and let them do their worst. After all, that might not be much. Wearing a gray wig and big whiskers was not a criminal offense in the eye of the law, nor even borrowing a gentleman's name—I was not so sure about borrowing a gentleman's niece, though! Well, I'd chance it. So I rang the bell and ordered the carriage round, and summoned the others, who had been climbing the church tower, and watching the blacksmith shoe a cart-horse, and trying to play skittles, and otherwise diverting themselves.

We drove home in sombre silence. The shadow of our approaching doom was over us all, I fancied. I got out of the carriage at a safe distance from home, begging Iris to drive

straight back, and not wait dinner if I did not come, then, walking beside Teddy's charger, explained my plan to him. "We'll go first to the livery stable. They are sure to be on the lookout for your return."

From a little knot of loafers and loungers at the stable entrance, one disengaged himself as we came in. To test my theory, while Teddy paid for his mount at the office, I walked sharply away and down the street. Turning, I saw that the "Brown Hat" had left Teddy, and was following me. Satisfied, I walked on slowly till Teddy overtook me and we made our way to the "Cosmopolitan" together. We made for Teddy's room, and fastened the door. "What will he do next?" asked Teddy, his eyes round with alarm. "Send for Sir Gregory—or the police?"

"How can I tell? But let's make certain which of us he wants. You go out and away—anywhere but to Collingwood Place, and see if he follows you."

Ten minutes after Teddy's departure, I opened the door, and the man was still there, lounging on an ottoman in the recess of the landing window, with the door of my room well in view.

My impatience was getting the better of me. I couldn't go on with this game of cat and mouse—and me the mouse—all day. I felt I must go out and give myself up to him, or assault and batter him, or something. What might not be going on at Peltzer's while I was a prisoner here! Madness seized me. I tore off my wig, rang for hot water, wiped off forty years of wrinkles with Burton's toilet cream, got rid of my whiskers and eyebrows with difficulty, and found a coat in the wardrobe that fitted. Then I ravaged and ransacked Burton's portmanteau and drawers for collar and scarf, gloves and hat, and, transformed to my original semblance, stepped boldly out on the landing among a large party who had just ascended the stairs. I passed my man within a foot of his nose, slipped off down the passage to the back stairs which had served Teddy's turn before, and sped like the wind to Collingwood Place.

A great misgiving seized me when I came in sight of the house. The door was open and the hall empty, but there were signs of a recent arrival or departure—I was not sure which—and an empty cab was in waiting near the steps. I dashed up to the sitting-room; angry voices sounded from within—one was Teddy's; the other, a savage, insulting growl I seemed to know by instinct. I flung the door open and Iris rushed up—

"Oh, uncle, dear uncle——!" she began, and stopped in dismay.

"What, another of your swains!" snarled the old ruffian. "Time I came to look after you. A nice, well-behaved, decent young person you seem! I suppose you thought to have a lark here with your young man before coming to me, eh? You disgraceful young hussy! What are you doing here—in these rooms, eh? Tell me that."

Before Teddy or I could have his blood, the door of my room opened and a calm voice interposed. "I beg your pardon, sir. Might I ask your business here?" said Phipson.

"Business?" yelled Sir Gregory. "My business? You'd better ask that young lady what her business here is."

Phipson only bowed and held the door open wider, and in there rustled upon us, irate and magnificent—Aunty Belinda herself! "That young lady is here as my companion," she cried with splendid mendacity. "I am Lady Belinda Barrington, and I want to know who you are, sir, making this disturbance in my apartments. Phipson, be so kind as to send for a policeman at once. Ah, there is my nephew! Just in time, Neville. Please turn out this person. He is either mad or intoxicated."

"But—but—but——" puffed Sir Gregory, "this is my niece; she was to have come to me four days ago——"

"She never said she was coming, did she?" said Aunty Bel with superb composure. "I am sure she did a wiser thing in coming here instead, and here she shall stay as long as she pleases."

"And I am not his niece!" cried Iris. "There is some dreadful mistake. My uncle is a gentleman! Oh, why doesn't he come?" she wailed.

Phipson here addressed some low-voiced remarks to Sir Gregory that appeared persuasive, for, muttering and growling he retreated with a farewell snarl about "my solicitor."

I never heard more of him. Phipson's first proceeding was to pack up and dispatch me to town by the very next train as the sole condition on which he would promise to set all right for me with the young lady.

I suppose he did. I don't know, and I think I don't particularly care by this time. Burton says he doesn't, either. We have never set eyes on her again.

She was engaged to that doctor all the time.

A CONVERSATION IN THE ALHAMBRA*

BY PEDRO ANTONIO DE ALARCON.



AMONG the many strangers who came this year to Granada to enjoy the celebrated festival of the most holy Corpus Christi, which is held in that city, not only in commemoration of the mystery of the Eucharist, but likewise of the expulsion of the Moors by Ferdinand and Isabella, were numbered a certain personage still somewhat young, and myself, that am absolutely so. Of me my readers have already had some account. Let us, then, relate something concerning the other young man.

He had traveled with me in the same diligence to the great Moorish city, though, unlike myself, he had not come from the Spanish capital, but from the little place called Venta del Zegrí, where the post-horses are changed, and distant some six leagues from Granada. During the short time occupied by the ten restless horses in galloping over that distance, we did no more than exchange a few compliments, thus following the custom of foreigners in not speaking with traveling companions with whom we were not acquainted. I compensated myself, however, by making a close study of the port and physiognomy of my fellow-traveler, and conjuring up, as one will do on such occasions, a complete history, or biography, according to the tenor of my own psychological intuitions.

He was a person of apparently thirty-two or thirty-three years of age, noble in stature, quiet and elegant in his movements. His complexion a pale brown, resembling the color of antique marble, and when he spoke (which, as I have already mentioned, was very seldom, and oftener with the driver

* Translated by Joseph E. Weber, from the Spanish, for Short Stories.

than with myself), it was with a seriousness approaching to melancholy. I thought that I observed in his speech a peculiar foreign accent, unlike any that I was accustomed to hear, such as French, English, Italian, German or Portuguese, though I do not speak so many languages. His full, deep black beard was cut short, and after the fashion of the Orientals or Semites, and his large, expressive eyes, black and velvet-like, reminded one of those of Malek-Adel, the hero of Matilde, or the Crusades, which we all admired so much when children. His hands were remarkable rather for their anatomical than for their aristocratic perfection; but his feet were irreproachable in every respect. His habit, consisting of the ordinary European traveling costume, was worn with a certain graceful abandon that attracted attention, and a half English, half Grecian cap that covered his carefully tonsured head, gave to his distinguished features a decidedly classical aspect.

Who could he be? In truth, when we descended from the coach in Granada, I parted from him without having fixed upon any one of the thousand conjectures which I had formed along the road. Now should you wish to know what were those conjectures, I should tell you that this individual impressed me at the same time as being a bandit chief, a prince traveling incognito, an Italian artist, a mercantile clerk, an Andalusian marquis, a pirate, a poet, a provincial comedian, a fantastic being of the genus vampire, a novice of the brotherhood of Saint Geronimo, and a soldier of Garibaldi; something, in short, either extraordinarily illustrious, exotic, terrible, dramatic and supernatural or farcical and commonplace. I tried to ascertain his name from the driver, but the latter answered that, as the passenger had entered the diligence so near Granada, he had not been given a ticket. I thought to follow him, but my attention was claimed by several persons who had come to meet me. It also occurred to me to question him directly, but fearing that this might be considered a discourtesy, I answered his silent salutation with a bow, and directed my way toward the Fonda de la Victoria, still filled with curiosity.

At nine o'clock on the following morning (the day of the Corpus), the bells were ringing merrily, the garrison band was playing the royal march, and the flowers that strewed the arched way, the hangings that adorned the balconies, and the tide of humanity that inundated every available space indi-

cated that the procession was moving along the *Jeruselén de Occidente*.

I took up my station in the *Plaza de Bib-Rambla*, near the *Zacatin*, and a few moments later I beheld defiling before me religious societies of every description, children from the foundling hospital, parochial crosses, and all the brilliant equipage that follows and precedes the most holy sacrament.

At length came the eight priests who bore upon their shoulders the ponderous tabernacle of solid silver, with the rich and beautiful monstrance of gold and precious stones containing the consecrated host. The devout multitude bowed their heads, fell upon their knees and struck their breasts, producing along the streets and in the plazas a thrill of pious enthusiasm, as if all those hearts were responding in mute accents to the hymns that were being sung by a hundred harmonious voices, amidst the glorious pealing of the bells, clouds of incense, and the fragrance of the flowers that were heaped around the monstrance.

In the midst of the throng of prostrate humanity, a solitary man remained standing. My attention, as well as that of every one else, was attracted toward him, and lo, it was my late fellow-traveler!

I know not if the wonder in my eyes took the shape of counsel, or of kindly reproof, but the fact is, that when our eyes met, the stranger bowed slightly, and then knelt down with the rest.

Shortly after the procession having passed, the people turned back to intercept it at some other point, and I lost sight of my man in the surge of the crowd.

THE LAST ZEGRI.

That afternoon I went up to the *Alhambra*. Its shady groves and ancient towers, its squares and palaces were deserted. The Christian festival had attracted every one to the city. I entered the *Casa Real*, as the palace of the Moorish kings is generally called.

Sweet solitude and the deepest silence reigned around that great pile, which, according to *Zorrilla*, was built by the hands of fairies. Now and then a swallow, from the shores of Africa, twittered upon the very capital, perchance, whereon its ancestors had rested four centuries before. The sun, likewise, as in

an earlier period, caressed the graceful columns of the Court of Lions, nor disdained to penetrate with its genial rays the delicate tracery of the galleries.

I was rambling through the court, my thoughts dwelling on such things as these, when I discovered that I was not alone, for there, opposite one of the most beautiful of those small temples that are now being restored, stood the companion of my recent journey.

The sound of my footfalls caused him to turn his head. He colored slightly, but advanced unhesitatingly to meet me. We exchanged a few words of simple courtesy, and then, turning towards the temple which he was examining upon my entrance, he asked in a tone of deep feeling:

"Why are they demolishing this?"

This question was prompted by the fact that the face of the temple was covered with scaffolding and that fragments from the ceiling lay upon the floor.

"They are not demolishing it," I answered, "but rebuilding it."

"Rebuilding it! Is it possible that the Spaniards love the Alhambra!" exclaimed in astonishment this strange personage.

"We love it beyond measure," I replied.

"Oh," continued he, "pardon the frankness with which I speak. I was here all alone, thinking that no one but myself remembered on this day the old Moslem fortress. It was so natural that you, also, should remain below this afternoon to enjoy the great Nazarene festival, that is being celebrated by modern Granada. By the way, I have an explanation to make to you. This morning in the Zacatin you reprehended me with your eyes—do not deny it—because I did not kneel. I assure you that it was not pride, it was not impiety. Perhaps, I, too, am a Christian, but I was beside myself with sorrow."

"Pardon me, but I do not understand," I replied, becoming all ears, for I perceived that my ardent desire to know the man's history was about to be satisfied.

"Nevertheless," he continued in a deeply melancholy tone, "I must give free vent to my feelings. Yesterday, when we were approaching this holy city you observed my silent emotion—this morning when the pageant was passing by, you surprised me in a state of untimely preoccupation, consequently you are already my confidant. Come, listen to me,"

and thus saying, he seized one of my hands and led me to the adjoining hall of the Abencerrages.

"Here," he began, "upon this marble fountain which you see is still red with bloodstains, the brave Zegris rolled the heads of the Abencerrages. In this court and in this hall dwelt those houris, daughters of Yemen and Damascus, whose charms bewitched the soldiers of the Prophet. Lift up your eyes and look upon those fretted balconies, which this very night will be visited by the inconstant moon. Behold on these sculptured ceilings of gold and crimson the mystic legends of a hundred glorious reigns. There are the praises to God and His warriors. From Albamar, who occupied forty years in building this alcazar, to Boabdil, who lost it in the drawing of a breath, all the heroes of Granada, have their names engraved in these fantastic galleries. Oh, venerable Yusef! Oh, wretched Muley! Oh, noble Mahomed! Where are your ill-starred descendants? Behold in me the last of the Zegris, that am come to evoke your shades among the ruins of the Alhambra. Oh, my unhappy brethren!"

"The last of the Zegris!" I exclaimed, awed and astounded. "How is that? You?"

Meanwhile it was growing dark. The mysterious stranger then leaning upon my arm, we left the hall of the Abencerrages and, crossing the Court of Lions and that of the Fountain, entered the Hall of Ambassadors.

On the way my thoughts were occupied with the strangeness of my adventure. There I was, in the middle of the nineteenth century, arm in arm with a Zegri, and one, too, wearing the garb of an Englishman, speaking French and Spanish, as polite and obliging as a Parisian, and tolerant and humane as the best Catholic. Could a poet have imagined anything more fortunate? Would not Chateaubriand himself have given me his Abencerrage of paper in exchange for my Zegri of flesh and bones?

The balcony, or arched and pillared window of the Hall of Ambassadors, is one of the classical features of the Alhambra. It looks out upon the gardens of the Carrera de Darro, and their perennial beauty of bud and blossom. Off in the distance are the picturesque hills of the Sacro-Monte, while from below is heard the melancholy murmur of the river, as it winds its way among trees and flowers that rise in terraces up that flank of the fortress, until their fragrance enters the win-

dows and perfumes the halls and chambers of the palace. It is like a tale from the Arabian Nights, a conception of genii and fairies.

It was to this window that I was conducted by the Zegri. Beyond the cathedral, whose sombre and gigantic form was boldly outlined against a background of golden light in the west, the gray twilight was already deepening into darkness. The moon had begun to cast its white beams through the foliage of the trees, which shone like silver gauze amidst the gloom of the groves and hollows that darkened the landscape. The nightingales, perpetual dwellers in that terrestrial paradise, greeted the soft, pale light with their most amorous melodies, while that songster of the silence, the cuckoo, broke forth into his measured and nightly repeated lament. It was evening and springtime, and in Granada! You that have not loved or wept in that Eden and at such an hour, little know of the mystery, the poetry and the enchantment inherent in the human soul.

"Yes, I am an African; I am Aben-Adul, the last of the Zegris," resumed my novel companion. "No, I am wrong—I am a Spaniard, even as thou art. I am an exiled Granadan, the scion of a proscribed race."

"It is not yet three centuries since my forefathers with their kindred and vassals and all their tribe, were ejected from the houses which they had built, from the lands which they had tilled and from the groves which they had planted to shelter their declining years.

"'You are Africans,' you told them (when they had lived in Spain for seven hundred years), and you banished them from this land and cast them into the sea.

"But by a miraculous interposition of Divine Providence no one knows how those half-famished castaways, swimming or in frail barks, arrived at length on the opposite coast of the Mediterranean and landed on the dreary shores of the unknown continent of Africa.

"You said that that was our country, but listen: When we arrived there the kings of the Atlas and of the desert called us foreigners, as you did, and said 'You are Spaniards! Back with you to the sea!'

"Behold us then, between two coasts that denied us a haven, and imagine, if you can, the desperateness of our situation.

"Between the sea and the empire of Morocco there was a

desolate, war-stricken stretch of coast called the Riff. There we encamped, having neither clothes nor bread, nor implements wherewith to till the soil, neither leaders nor priests, law nor God, like the doomed Hebrews!

"Afterwards we moved toward Tetuán and Tangier, where the more fortunate families established themselves, leaving the remainder to seek a refuge in the mountains.

"And there we have been for three hundred years, carrying our canvas tents from place to place, and knowing no other home; wandering nomads, without civilization and without arts, without a name, a king, a country or a tomb.

"The Moroccan emperor robs us and pursues us like wild beasts. The Christian king calls us dogs and shoots us down as such. Neither one nor the other will grant us the privileges of citizenship, call us countrymen or recognize in us any kinship to themselves.

"And this is why we, the sons of those disinherited princes, return evil for evil, pillage for pillage and infamy for infamy.

"I shall never again see my brethren of the Riff. There they are, over yonder, they that reared the Generaliffe, dwelt in the Albaicin, transformed this plain into a paradise, beautified the banks of the rivers with gardens, enameled the rocks with gold, carpeted your pathway with flowers.

"That is how they invade! That is how they colonize! My race has fulfilled its mission on earth—yours has not.

"During our occupancy of Spain, we improved it and civilized it, redeemed it from a state of barbarism. Physicians, poets, botanists, architects, philosophers, artisans, husbandmen—all these we were in your country. Science and art, both are indebted to us, and all mankind owe us a vote of thanks.

"There they are, I repeat, there are my countrymen, plunged in misery, ignorance and ignominy, while you are here, happy, rich, powerful and renowned.

"And now, Christians, philanthropists, propagandists, abolitionists, what have you done for my people? To what purpose are arms, eloquence, martyrdom?

"Does it not horrify you to know that at the very doors of Spain there is a race of men sunk in barbarism, wild, almost fierce, and that you are doing nothing to redeem them?

"I can understand how such savage conditions might exist among the Greenlanders, dwelling in inaccessible mountains of ice at the globe's remotest bound, or among the negroes

buried in the unexplored sands of the Torrid Zone, since in those regions one might expect to find a lawless people. But that such are to be found in the centre of the civilized world, surrounded on all sides by enlightened communities, by whom they are left to live and die like irrational beings, is base and scandalous; nay, it is a sacrilege!

"You, Spaniards, will answer to God for the crimes of the Moors in this life and for their damnation in the other! Even so, for you have neglected your duty, abdicated your right and violated the providential law of civilization.

"As for me," he continued with bitterness, "I am no longer an African, no longer an Islamite, no longer a Zegri. . . . At fifteen years of age I was the poet of my tribe. A generous Christian taught me your language and your religion, and in your tongue it was that I learned my history, a history which brought to my face the blush of shame.

"That I, the descendant of kings, should be converted into a beast like Nebuchadnezzar! I, a poet, despised by the world that thinks and feels, esteemed of my species, a Pariah among freemen, the reproach and degradation of my race!

"I sold my herds, my musket, my tent, thrice kissed my promised wife, the beautiful Alcina, and fled from Africa forever.

"For ten years I roamed about the world, favored by fortune in all that I undertook. I have been a soldier in the Crimea, a merchant in India, a consul in Jerusalem, a sailor in America, and all these I shall be again—but not a Riffian.

"But if my wealth and valor, my faith in Christ and love for man could be instrumental in restoring to my people the social dignity which they have lost, the rights of humanity which they are denied, and the benefits of the civilization which they have forgotten, my life would not have been lived in vain, and happiness, for the first time, would find a resting place in my heart."

THE FANDANGO.

Thus spake Aben-Adul. I grasped his hand warmly, and was all prepared to answer him with one of those elaborate disquisitions on our future in Africa, in which we Spanish writers are wont to indulge (and which the government has at last come to consider a prime necessity), when a new incident

A HAPPY VOYAGE

BY A. T. QUILLER-COUCH.



THE cottage that I have inhabited these six years looks down on the one quiet creek in a harbor full of business. The vessels that enter beneath Battery Point move up past the gray walls and green quay-doors of the port to the jetties where their cargoes lie. All day long I can see them faring up and down past the mouth of my creek; and all the year round I listen to the sounds of them—the dropping or lifting of anchors, the wh-h-ing! of a siren-whistle cutting the air like a twanged bow, the concertina that plays at night, the rush of the clay cargo shot from the jetty into the lading ship. But all this is too far remote to vex me. Only one vessel lies beneath my terrace; and she has lain there for a dozen years. After many voyages she was purchased by the Board of Guardians in our district, dismasted, and anchored up here to serve as a hospital ship in case the cholera visited us. She has never had a sick man on board from that day to the present. But once upon a time three people spent a very happy night on her deck, as you shall hear. She is called The Gleaner.

I think I was never so much annoyed in my life as on the day when Annie, my only servant, gave me a month's "warning." That was four years ago; and she gave up cooking for me to marry a young watchmaker down at the town—a youth of no mark save for a curious distortion of the left eyebrow (due to much gazing through a circular glass into the bowels of watches), a frantic assortment of religious convictions, a habit of playing the fiddle in hours of ease, and an absurd name—Tubal Cain Bonaday. I noticed that Annie softened it to "Tubey."

Of course I tried to dissuade her, but my arguments were those of a wifeless man, and very weak. She listened to them with much patience, and went off to buy her wedding-frock.

She was a plain girl, without a scintilla of humor; and had just that sense of an omelet that is vouchsafed to one woman in a generation.

So she and Tubal Cain were married at the end of the month, and disappeared on their honeymoon, no one quite knew whither. They went on the last day of April.

At half-past eight in the evening of May 6 I had just finished my seventh miserable dinner. My windows were open to the evening, and the scent of the gorse-bushes below the terrace hung heavily underneath the veranda and stole into the room where I sat before the white cloth, in the lamplight. I had taken a cigarette and was reaching for the matchbox when I chanced to look up, and paused to marvel at a singular beauty in the atmosphere outside.

It seemed a final atonement of sky and earth in one sheet of vivid blue. Of form I could see nothing; the heavens, the waters of the creek below, the woods on the opposite shore were simply indistinguishable—blotted out in this one color. If you can recall certain advertisements of Mr. Reckitt, and can imagine one of these transparent, with a soft light glowing behind it, you will be as near as I can help you to guessing the exact color. And, but for a solitary star and the red lamp of a steamer lying off the creek's mouth, this blue covered the whole firmament and face of the earth.

I lit my cigarette and stepped out upon the veranda. In a minute or so a sound made me return, fetch a cap from the hall, and descend the terrace softly.

My feet trod on bluebells and red robins, and now and then crushed the fragrance out of a low-lying spike of gorse. I knew the flowers were there, though in this curious light I could only see them by peering closely. At the foot of the terrace I pulled up and leaned over the oak fence that guarded the abrupt drop into the creek.

There was a light just underneath. It came from the deck of the hospital ship, and showed me two figures standing there—a woman leaning against the bulwarks, and a man beside her. The man had a fiddle under his chin, and was playing Annie Laurie, rather slowly and with a deal of sweetness.

When the melody ceased I craned still further over the oak fence and called down:

"Tubal Cain!"

The pair gave a start, and there was some whispering before the answer came up to me.

"Is that you, sir?"

"To be sure," said I. "What are you two about on board The Gleaner?"

Some more whispering followed, and then Tubal Cain spoke again:

"It doesn't matter now, sir. We've lived aboard her for a week, and to-night's the end of our honeymooning. If 'tis no liberty, sir, Annie's wishful that you should join us."

Somehow, the invitation, coming through this mysterious atmosphere, seemed at once natural and happy. The fiddle began again as I stepped away from the fence and went down to get my boat out. In three minutes I was afloat, and a stroke or two brought me to the ship's ladder. Annie and Tubal Cain stood at the top to welcome me.

But if I had felt no incongruity in paying this respectful visit to my ex-cook and her lover, I own that her appearance made me stare. For, if you please, she was dressed out like a lady, in a gown of pale blue satin trimmed with swansdown—a low-necked gown, too, though she had flung a white shawl over her shoulders. Imagine this and the flood of blue light around us, and you will hardly wonder that, half-way up the ladder, I paused to take breath. Tubal Cain was dressed as usual, and tucking his fiddle under his arm, led me up to shake hands with his bride as if she were a queen. I cannot say if she blushed. Certainly she received me with dignity; and then, inverting a bucket that lay on the deck, seated herself; while Tubal Cain and I sat down on the deck facing her, with our backs against the bulwarks.

"It's just this, sir," explained the bridegroom, laying his fiddle across his lap, and speaking as if in answer to a question; "it's just this—by trade you know me for a watchmaker, and for a Plymouth Brother by conviction. All the week I'm bending over a counter, and every Sabbath-day I speak in prayer-meeting what I hold, that life's a dull pilgrimage to a better world. If you ask me, sir, to-night, I ought to say the same. But a man may break out for once; and when so well as on his honeymoon? For a week I've been a free heathen; for a week I've been hiding here, living with the woman I love, in the open air; and night after night for a week Annie here

has clothed herself like a woman of fashion. Oh, my God! it has been a beautiful time—a happy, beautiful time that ends to-night!”

He set down the fiddle, crooked up a knee and clasped his hands round it, looking at Annie.

“Annie, girl, what is it that we believe till to-morrow morning? You believe—eh?—that ’tis a rare world, full of delights, and with no ugliness in it?”

Annie nodded.

“And you love every soul—the painted woman in the streets no less than your own mother?”

Annie nodded again. “I’d nurse ’em both if they were sick,” she said.

“One like the other?”

“No difference.”

“And there’s nothing shames you?” Here he rose and took her hand. “You wouldn’t blush to kiss me before master here?”

“Why should I?” She gave him a sober kiss, and let her hand rest in his.

I looked at her. She was just as quiet as in the old days when she used to lay my table. It was like gazing at a play.

I should be ashamed to repeat the nonsense that Tubal Cain thereupon began to talk; for it was mere midsummer madness. But I smoked four pipes contentedly while the sound of his voice continued, and am convinced that he never performed so well at prayer-meeting. Down at the town I heard the church clock striking midnight, and then one o’clock; and was only aroused when the youth started up and grasped his fiddle.

“And now, sir, if you would consent to one thing, ’twould make us very happy. You can’t play the violin, worse luck; but you might take a step or two round the deck with Annie, if I strike up a waltz-tune for you to move to.”

It was ridiculous, but as he began to play I moved up to Annie, put my arm around her, and we began to glide round and round on the deck. Her face was turned away from mine, and looked over my shoulder; if our eyes had met, I am convinced I must have laughed or wept. It was half farce, half deadly earnest, and for me as near to hysterics as a sane man can go. Tubal Cain, that inspired young Plymouth Brother, was solemn as a judge. As for Annie, I would give a consid-

erable amount, at this moment, to know what she thought of it. But she stepped very lightly and easily, and I am not sure I ever enjoyed a waltz so much. The blue light—that bewitching, intoxicating blue light—paled on us as we danced. The gray conquered it, and I felt that when we looked at each other the whole absurdity would strike us, and I should never be able to face these lovers again without a furious blush. As the day crept on, I stole a glance at Tubal Cain. He was scraping away desperately—with his eyes shut. For us the dance had become weariness, but we went on and on. We were afraid to halt.

Suddenly a string of the violin snapped. We stopped, and I saw Tubal Cain's hand pointing eastward. A golden ripple came dancing down the creek, and, at the head of the comber beyond, the sun's edge was mounting.

"Morning!" said the bridegroom.

"It's all done," said Annie, holding out a hand to me, without looking up. "And thank you, sir."

"We danced through the gray," I answered, and that was all I could find to say, as I stepped towards the ladder.

Half an hour later as I looked out of window before getting into bed I saw in the sunlight a boat moving down the creek towards the town. Tubal Cain was rowing and Annie sat in the stern. She had changed her gown.

They have been just an ordinary couple ever since, and attend their chapel regularly. Sometimes Annie comes over to make me an omelet; and, as a matter of fact, she is now in the kitchen. But not a word has ever been spoken between us about her honeymoon.



THE NEW BROOM*

BY H. J. LOWRY.



IN the good old days of the French war, when England was so occupied upon the seas that she had little time to guard her coasts minutely, the people of Trewarne were smugglers to a man, and throve exceedingly. There were, indeed, riding-officers stationed hard by, but they were not numerous enough to interfere effectually—nor, 'tis said, were they notably eager to have their hands strengthened.

But this season of prosperity and untroubled quiet came to an end. Peace to England meant the very reverse to Trewarne. It was with the utmost disgust that its people saw their old friends being replaced, or so surrounded with new colleagues, altogether unused to the ways of the district, that they could not remain harmless if they would. It was soon beyond a doubt that the revenue-men were really in earnest in their endeavors to suppress the free trade.

Among the men of Trewarne, the whole blame in this matter was laid upon the shoulders of John Coffin, a new man, whose energy was such that in mere self-defence his comrades were compelled to emulate his detestable activity.

He was a little man, black-bearded, and exceeding neat in his attire. He spoke outlandishly, mincing his words after the manner of people inhabiting the regions which lie up the country. And he interfered shamelessly with the business of his neighbors.

For example, at the edge of the cliff, some two miles to the west of Trewarne, there was a copper mine. Just above the sea-level a tunnel had been driven from the shaft to the face of the cliff. The water pumped up from the bottom

* From The Strand Magazine.

of the mine was not taken to the surface, but simply raised to the level of this "adit," and so allowed to gain the sea. And the recording angel alone can tell how many a keg of good liquor, landed on the beach, has gone into that adit, been carried to the shaft, and conveyed to the surface in the great iron "kibble," a bucket which was used for hauling the ore to "grass." Once the stuff had gained the surface, it was stowed away in the engine-house, to be sent into its ultimate destination at a convenient opportunity.

Now, one night a very decent little cargo had been run. A goodly number of kegs were buried in the sand of the beach; some two score were carried up into the adit, and later on drawn to the surface in the kibble. They had been carefully disposed in the engine-house, and all seemed well, when suddenly the place was invaded by a gang of revenue-men. The engineer did not lose his presence of mind; he sprang to the safety-valve. In a moment the room was filled with steam, and Customs officers and miners were tumbling one over the other in wild confusion. But, presently, John Coffin got to the safety-valve, and stopped the escape of steam. The miners melted away like summer clouds (being unarmed), and, a little later, saw the good liquor going off in casks to the stronghold of the revenue-men. Mr. Coffin was a proud man, but there were ominous murmurs as he retired, and his name suggested many a grim pleasantry.

This sort of thing happened continually, but as the smugglers were still secure from loss if they saved one cargo in three—and as they had behind them many years of uninterrupted success—it made no great difference. Indeed, the men engaged in the traffic saw the humorous aspect in the triumphant mien of John Coffin, and for a little while thought the spectacle well worth the loss of a few kegs from time to time. It was at this time that they constructed a "cavie," or store, in a big field not two hundreds yards away from the Custom-house. But John Coffin was not content with these successes, and his ambition soon became intolerable.

Of all the young men in those parts, Jim Penlerrick was the most promising. There were none but knew the traditions of the smuggling, and could help if help were needed. But Jim was one of those rare spirits who make traditions. He was hardly more than four-and-twenty, tall, fair, and boyish, but he had already made himself a name by the cleverness

of the dodges he invented, and the magnificent coolness with which he carried them into execution. It was no wonder that Maggie Opie, the prettiest girl in Trewarne, was proud to have him known as her sweetheart.

She was a little, dark-haired creature, with cheeks tinted like wild roses, and big gray eyes that would have made conversation an easy thing to her if she had chanced to be born dumb. There was a childish innocence in them sometimes, and sometimes a reckless mischief, which Jim himself could only envy and admire. It was said that some of his cleverest inventions had been inspired by her. And there was only one thing in her which Jim deemed unreasonable: she appeared to detest John Coffin with all the strength of her soul. It seemed to Jim that to do this in such a case was to go beyond what was necessary or appropriate. He had outwitted the man so frequently, that he felt almost kindly towards him.

But one day his view of the matter was changed. Maggie reported to him certain events which had befallen her while he was away upon his latest voyage to Roscoff.

Once or twice lately, she explained, it had been borne in upon her that John Coffin was much more polite to her than he had any reason to be. She had forborne to speak of the matter, because there were a multitude of smuggling histories which proved beyond a doubt that it was oftentimes convenient for such a one as she to have something of a hold over such as he. But now she could not ignore the matter any longer.

"What you'll say," she said, "I'm sure I can't think; but I hope you won't do anything rash."

It appeared, then, that Maggie was coming back to the village from a visit to Breach, a little church-town two miles distant from Trewarne. She had hardly started when she met John Coffin.

"Good afternoon, Miss Opie," he said. "'Tis pleasant weather for the time of the year"; and he stopped, so that Maggie could hardly pass on immediately.

"Iss," she said, "'tis pretty weather."

"May I keep 'ee company along the road?" said the man.

"'Tis a lonely old road."

Maggie raised her eyes to his; then they fluttered and fell. " 'Tis very kind of you."

They discussed a multitude of indifferent subjects. Then,

"I didn't see Mr. Penlerrick when I was down in Trewarne just now," said Coffin.

"No?" said Maggie.

"I didn't see the 'Dream,' either. I suppose she's gone to sea again?"

"How should I know?" said Maggie, innocently. "Is Jim Penlerrick the man to tell a girl what are his plans?"

"Well," said Coffin, "I suppose he'll be back for Sunday, being Feasten-Sunday. I shouldn't think he'd be later than Thursday, for the fair's on Friday."

"Are 'ee going to the fair, Mr. Coffin?" said Maggie.

The man smiled. "If I could see you there——"

"Aw," said Maggie, "you can see that any time. Why, the waxworks is coming that haven't been here these four years."

"Waxworks is no attraction," said Coffin, contemptuously. "Give me flesh and blood."

"Well," said Maggie, "if waxworks is no attraction, I suppose you won't be there."

In a minute or two the subject was changed.

"'Tis a lonely life down here for one that's been used to bigger places," said Coffin. "If a man had a wife, perhaps 'twould be all he'd want. He'd have some interest in his work then; but as it is——"

"I won't bring 'ee no further, Mr. Coffin," said Maggie, interrupting him. "Many thanks for your company."

And the little man looked at her meltingly. "No need of thanks!" he ejaculated. "'Tis yours whenever you like to take it, and for so long a time as you choose." He raised his hat with a flourish, and Maggie walked on homeward, having now reached the outskirts of the village. She knew not whether to laugh or to be indignant. Finally she did both.

Jim Penlerrick and the men of the "Dream" landed their cargo that very night, and got it into a place of security without untimely interruption. The next morning Maggie came to her window early and inspected the harbor which it overlooked. The "Dream" was there; even while she looked at it she heard a whistle, and, glancing up the road, she saw Jim Penlerrick coming to call on her. So she descended quickly, heard the tale of his adventures during the time of this last absence, and, in conclusion, told her own tale.

"It looked to me," she added, "like as if the man wanted me to tell all I know, and offered to make me Mrs. Coffin in re-

ward. Now, Jim, don't 'ee go an' do anything foolish. Perhaps he never meant it after all."

Jim laughed grimly. "Perhaps not," he said. "All the same, I fancy a bit of a lesson would do him no harm. He can't have thought you was bad-hearted, so he must ha' fancied you could be fooled easy. And he must be cured of all such fancies at that."

Maggie flushed. "I never thought o' that," she said. "Jim, you can do just what you like with him." And Jim went off to his breakfast, full of thought as to how the end he had in view was to be obtained.

That afternoon he went through the village with a friend, carrying a stout post some ten or twelve feet in length. They made off in the direction of a small and secluded cove, about a mile to the west of Trewarne.

Later in the day John Coffin chanced upon a little girl who was idly wandering by the roadside. He was about to pass on when the child spoke.

"Do 'ee know the lane leadin' to Penrize Cove?" said the child.

"Yes," said Coffin.

"Well," said the child, "I got a message for 'ee. You must be at the top of the lane by half-past seven, to meet a friend."

Coffin inspected the messenger suspiciously. "Who sent you?" he asked.

"Aw," said the child, "she said I mustn't mention no name."

Coffin laughed. "Well," he said, "I don't know what you need. Here, this'll buy you some lollipops." He gave the child some coppers and passed on. And he was perfectly right in the impression he carried with him, for the little girl waited until he was out of sight, and then went off as speedily as might be to Maggie Opie's home, where she reported progress and showed Coffin's gift.

"Well done," said Maggie. "Spoil the Egyptians where and when you can. There's good examples for that." But at half-past seven she was talking at the cottage gate with the daughter of a neighbor, nor did she quit her home until more than an hour later, when Jim Penlerrick turned up and suggested a brief stroll. He had manifestly some jest to share with her.

Now, John Coffin had never doubted as to the identity of

the sender of the message. At half-past seven precisely he began to mount the hilly lane, and when he had reached the appointed place he lit a pipe and waited. For a long time no one came. He began to grow more and more impatient, knowing that the girl could have nothing on earth to keep her at this hour. And slowly there dawned upon him a dreadful doubt: could it be that she had fooled him and was not coming at all? He put the thought from him, but only for a time. In the end he swore vehemently, and would have turned away, had not a roar of laughter suddenly arrested him. Before he could recover from his surprise he was struggling in the midst of half a dozen men, and a moment later they had overpowered and bound him, putting a gag between his teeth.

All this time they had not spoken a word, and it was still in utter silence that he was compelled to march, a man at either arm, in the direction of the Cove. Coffin did not doubt that he had fallen into the hands of smugglers resolved to revenge on him the recent injuries to the traffic they carried on. He remembered a hundred horrid tales of violence, and his heart quailed within him.

They led him onward until the sound of the sea broke on his ears, and soon he was being led by a wild and dangerous path down to the little yellow beach. His captors dealt none too gently with him when they came to cross the space of tumbled boulders at the foot of the cliff. And when they had gained the beach they led him to where a tall, wooden post had been fixed in an upright position in the sand. One of the men advanced and kicked it. It quivered, but otherwise was firm, being deeply sunk, and having big stones buried about its base. And John Coffin would have cried aloud for mercy had he been able.

For he realized what they were going to do with him. They raised him, and bound him against the wooden post, and he looked desperately out to sea—gagged, so that he still could not speak—and wondered how long it would be before the advancing tide would reach him. The men moved about in silence, testing all the knots with tremendous vigilance before they moved away in a band and vanished in the blackness of the cliff's shadow. And John Coffin was left alone to watch the slow, relentless advance of doom.

There was no moon. The clear starlight quivered in lines

of silver on the dark plain of the sea. He could distinguish through the gloom the glimmer of the breakers; there was a heavy ground-swell on, and he knew that, even if he had been able to shout, even if any human being had chanced to approach this lonely region of the coast after the fall of darkness, it would still be in vain to hope for rescue, since his voice would not be heard above the din of the tide.

He did not lack courage—as, indeed, he had proved beyond dispute by the conduct which had brought him into his present predicament; for to interfere seriously with the smuggling was to take up arms against a united countryside—even, he had sometimes dimly suspected, against the local magnates who should have been glad to co-operate with him in the work. And in that work he had never been afraid. He knew that he risked his life; but he went armed, and the risk would never have troubled him had he been a free man and at liberty to fight for his life. He would almost have enjoyed the excitement. But to be bound to a post on a lonely beach, and to wait in the darkness for death, whose thundering footsteps already deafened him, was an ordeal beyond what a man is made to bear. A cold fear froze his heart. They might have taken away the gag, and he would still have lacked the power of speech.

He realized that this vengeance of the smugglers was not so much a return for his interferences with their actual trade, as for the few words he had spoken with Maggie Opie; and he knew that her treachery had betrayed him. And he had stopped to talk with Maggie, in the first place, not because he knew that she possessed valuable information, but merely because he had seen no girl in all his life who was half so pretty, no girl whom he would more unwillingly have vexed. And he had endeavored to learn the secrets with which she was acquainted involuntarily and out of habit.

He had been ten minutes alone, though the time had seemed longer than the longest night to the man who is tired and cannot sleep. Suddenly he heard footsteps close at hand.

The men had returned. They had gained the top of the path, and then, a mode of deepening the horror of his situation occurring to them, they had returned. They did not speak a word. One of them took a big red handkerchief from his pocket, folded it, and bound it tightly over Coffin's eyes. Then they once more left him alone.

The thunder of the sea grew louder and more near. The very minutes seemed interminable and so filled with intolerable fear that he constantly fancied he must lose his reason immediately. And suddenly a shock of terror threw the blood back upon his heart. A wave had broken close at hand; the cold water had reached his feet.

He waited for the next; waited, as it seemed to him, for many minutes. Possibly, he thought, the wave which had reached his feet had been one of those tremendous ninth waves with which the sea kills men when, with the other eight, it has played with them as a cat plays with a wretched mouse.

He waited, and waited. . . .

Suddenly he awoke as from a drugged sleep, and found that day was breaking. The waves were far away. And Maggie stood near, the red handkerchief in her hand.

She looked at him strangely, and he endeavored to recall the events of the night. Maggie saw his difficulty and spoke.

"Are 'ee better now?" she said. "'Twas me that put 'ee there. I told, and the men swore they would punish 'ee, for a joke, so they fastened 'ee there, taking care to put 'ee just where the tide would stop when it came up. And I laughed over it when they came back and told me what they had done. But, soon as I was abed, I began to think what fear you would have—I could see you standing there and waiting for death; 'twas as if I stood there myself. I knew 'twas but a joke, and Lord knows I've no love for revenue-men. So I fought against it at first. But at last I couldn't stand against it longer; I came out to set 'ee free."

She cut the bands, and he took the gag from his mouth. "Look!" she said, "you won't make a row about it. 'Twas only a joke. The tide never wetted more than your feet."

John Coffin turned and looked at her in silence. "No," he said, at last, "I will say nothing. But you are hard on a man whose sin was that he thought you the prettiest maid he had ever seen." He turned away from her and moved stiffly and slowly towards the path which led up the face of the cliff.

Maggie watched him as he went. "I have no love for revenue-men," she had said; which is curious, for when she was married six months later, she took the name of Coffin.



DR. HEIDEGGER'S EXPERIMENT

BY NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

Famous Story Series.

THAT very singular man, old Dr. Heidegger, once invited four venerable friends to meet him in his study. There were three white-bearded gentlemen, Mr. Medbourne, Colonel Killigrew and Mr. Gascoigne, and a withered gentlewoman, whose name was the Widow Wycherly. They were all melancholy old creatures, who had been unfortunate in life, and whose greatest misfortune it was that they were not long ago in their graves. Mr. Medbourne, in the vigor of his age, had been a prosperous merchant, and had lost his all by a frantic speculation, and was now little better than a mendicant. Colonel Killigrew had wasted his best years, and his health and substance, in the pursuit of sinful pleasures, which had given birth to a brood of pains, such as the gout, and divers other torments of soul and body. Mr. Gascoigne was a ruined politician, a man of evil fame, or at least had been so, till time had buried him from the knowledge of the present generation, and made him obscure instead of infamous. As for the Widow Wycherly, tradition tells us that she was a great beauty in her day; but, for a long while past, she had lived in deep seclusion, on account of certain scandalous stories, which had prejudiced the gentry of the town against her. It is a circumstance worth mentioning, that each of these three old gentlemen, Mr. Med-

bourne, Colonel Killigrew and Mr. Gascoigne, were early lovers of the Widow Wycherly, and had once been on the point of cutting each other's throats for her sake. And, before proceeding farther, I will merely hint that Dr. Heidegger and all his four guests were sometimes thought to be a little beside themselves, as is not unfrequently the case with old people when worried either with present troubles or woful recollections.

"My dear old friends," said Dr. Heidegger, motioning them to be seated, "I am desirous of your assistance in one of those little experiments with which I amuse myself here in my study."

If all stories were true, Dr. Heidegger's study must have been a very curious place. It was a dim, old-fashioned chamber, festooned with cobwebs and besprinkled with antique dust. Around the walls stood several oaken bookcases, the lower shelves of which were filled with rows of gigantic folios and black-letter quartos, and the upper with little parchment-covered duodecimos. Over the central bookcase was a bronze bust of Hippocrates, with which, according to some authorities, Dr. Heidegger was accustomed to hold consultations in all difficult cases of his practice. In the obscurest corner of the room stood a tall and narrow oaken closet, with its door ajar, within which doubtfully appeared a skeleton. Between two of the bookcases hung a looking-glass, presenting its high and dusty plate within a tarnished gilt frame. Among many wonderful stories related of this mirror, it was fabled that the spirits of all the doctor's deceased patients dwelt within its verge, and would stare him in the face whenever he looked thitherward. The opposite side of the chamber was ornamented with the full-length portrait of a young lady, arrayed in the faded magnificence of silk, satin and brocade, and with a visage as faded as her dress. Above half a century ago Dr. Heidegger had been on the point of marriage with this young lady, but being affected with some slight disorder she had swallowed one of her lover's prescriptions and died on the bridal evening. The greatest curiosity of the study remains to be mentioned. It was a ponderous folio volume, bound in black leather, with massive silver clasps. There were no letters on the back, and nobody could tell the title of the book. But it was well known to be a book of magic, and once, when a chambermaid had lifted it, merely to brush away the dust,

the skeleton had rattled in its closet, the picture of the young lady had stepped one foot upon the floor, and several ghastly faces had peeped forth from the mirror, while the brazen head of Hippocrates frowned and said, "Forbear!"

Such was Dr. Heidegger's study. On the summer afternoon of our tale, a small round table, as black as ebony, stood in the centre of the room, sustaining a cut-glass vase, of beautiful form and elaborate workmanship. The sunshine came through the window, between the heavy festoons of two faded damask curtains, and fell directly across this vase, so that a mild splendor was reflected from it on the ashen visages of the five old people who sat around. Four champagne glasses were also on the table.

"My dear old friends," repeated Dr. Heidegger, "may I reckon on your aid in performing an exceedingly curious experiment?"

Now Dr. Heidegger was a very strange old gentleman, whose eccentricity had become the nucleus for a thousand fantastic stories. Some of these fables, to my shame be it spoken, might possibly be traced back to mine own veracious self, and if any passages of the present tale should startle the reader's faith, I must be content to bear the stigma of a fiction-monger.

When the doctor's four guests heard him talk of his proposed experiment, they anticipated nothing more wonderful than the murder of a mouse in an air-pump, or the examination of a cobweb by the microscope, or some similar nonsense, with which he was constantly in the habit of pestering his intimates. But without waiting for a reply, Dr. Heidegger hobbled across the chamber, and returned with the same ponderous folio, bound in black leather, which common report affirmed to be a book of magic. Undoing the silver clasps, he opened the volume, and took from among its black-letter pages a rose, or what was once a rose, though now the green leaves and crimson petals had assumed one brownish hue, and the ancient flower seemed ready to crumble to dust in the doctor's hands.

"This rose," said Dr. Heidegger, with a sigh, "this same withered and crumbling flower, blossomed five and fifty years ago. It was given me by Sylvia Ward, whose portrait hangs yonder; and I meant to wear it in my bosom at our wedding. Five-and-fifty years it has been treasured between the leaves

of this old volume. Now, would you deem it possible that this rose of half a century could ever bloom again?"

"Nonsense!" said the Widow Wycherly, with a peevish toss of her head. "You might as well ask whether an old woman's wrinkled face could ever bloom again."

"See!" answered Dr. Heidegger.

He uncovered the vase and threw the faded rose into the water which it contained. At first it lay lightly on the surface of the fluid, appearing to imbibe none of its moisture. Soon, however, a singular change began to be visible. The crushed and dried petals stirred, and assumed a deepening tinge of crimson, as if the flower were reviving from a death-like slumber; the slender stalk and twigs of foliage became green, and there was the rose of half a century, looking as fresh as when Sylvia Ward had first given it to her lover. It was scarcely full-blown, for some of its delicate red leaves curled modestly around its moist bosom, within which two or three dewdrops were sparkling.

"That is certainly a very pretty deception," said the doctor's friends, carelessly, however, for they had witnessed greater miracles at a conjurer's show. "Pray, how was it effected?"

"Did you never hear of the 'Fountain of Youth'?" asked Dr. Heidegger, "which Ponce de Leon, the Spanish adventurer, went in search of two or three centuries ago?"

"But did Ponce de Leon ever find it?" said the Widow Wycherly.

"No," answered Dr. Heidegger, "for he never sought it in the right place. The famous Fountain of Youth, if I am rightly informed, is situated in the southern part of the Floridian peninsula, not far from Lake Macaco. Its source is overshadowed by several gigantic magnolias, which, though numberless centuries old, have been kept as fresh as violets by the virtues of this wonderful water. An acquaintance of mine, knowing my curiosity in such matters, has sent me what you see in the vase."

"Ahem!" said Colonel Killigrew, who believed not a word of the doctor's story; "and what may be the effect of this fluid on the human frame?"

"You shall judge for yourself, my dear Colonel," replied Dr. Heidegger; "and all of you, my respected friends, are welcome to so much of this admirable fluid as may restore to you the

bloom of youth. For my own part, having had much trouble in growing old, I am in no hurry to grow young again. With your permission, therefore, I will merely watch the progress of the experiment."

While he spoke Dr. Heidegger had been filling the four champagne glasses with the water of the Fountain of Youth. It was apparently impregnated with an effervescent gas, for little bubbles were continually ascending from the depths of the glasses, and bursting in silvery spray at the surface. As the liquor diffused a pleasant perfume, the old people doubted not that it possessed cordial and comfortable properties; and though utterly skeptics as to its rejuvenescent power, they were inclined to swallow it at once. But Dr. Heidegger besought them to stay a moment.

"Before you drink, my respectable old friends," said he, "it would be well that, with the experience of a lifetime to direct you, you should draw up a few general rules for your guidance in passing a second time through the perils of youth. Think what a sin and shame it would be if, with your peculiar advantages, you should not become patterns of virtue and wisdom to all the young people of the age."

The doctor's four venerable friends made him no answer, except by a feeble and tremulous laugh, so very ridiculous was the idea, that, knowing how closely repentance treads behind the steps of error, they should ever go astray again.

"Drink, then," said the doctor, bowing. "I rejoice that I have so well selected the subjects of my experiment."

With palsied hands they raised the glasses to their lips. The liquor, if it really possessed such virtues as Dr. Heidegger imputed to it, could not have been bestowed on four human beings who needed it more wofully. They looked as if they had never known what youth or pleasure was, but had been the offspring of Nature's dotage, and always the gray, decrepit, sapless, miserable creatures who now sat stooping round the doctor's table, without life enough in their souls or bodies to be animated even by the prospect of growing young again. They drank off the water, and replaced their glasses on the table.

Assuredly there was an almost immediate improvement in the aspect of the party, not unlike what might have been produced by a glass of generous wine, together with a sudden glow of cheerful sunshine, brightening over all their visages at

once. There was a healthful suffusion on their cheeks, instead of the ashen hue that had made them look so corpse-like. They gazed at one another, and fancied that some magic power had really begun to smooth away the deep and sad inscriptions which Father Time had been so long engraving on their brows. The Widow Wycherly adjusted her cap, for she felt almost like a young woman again.

"Give us more of this wondrous water!" cried they eagerly. "We are younger, but we are still too old! Quick, give us more!"

"Patience, patience!" quoth Dr. Heidegger, who sat watching the experiment, with philosophic coolness. "You have been a long time growing old. Surely, you might be content to grow young in half an hour! But the water is at your service."

Again he filled their glasses with the liquor of youth, enough of which still remained in the vase to turn half the old people in the city to the age of their own grandchildren. While the bubbles were yet sparkling on the brim the doctor's four guests snatched their glasses from the table, and swallowed the contents at a single gulp. Was it delusion? Even while the draught was passing down their throats it seemed to have wrought a change on their whole systems. Their eyes grew clear and bright, a dark shade deepened among their silvery locks. They sat around the table, three gentlemen of middle age, and a woman, hardly beyond her buxom prime.

"My dear widow, you are charming!" cried Colonel Killigrew, whose eyes had been fixed upon her face, while the shadows of age were flitting from it like darkness from the crimson daybreak.

The fair widow knew, of old, that Colonel Killigrew's compliments were not aways measured by sober truth, so she started up and ran to the mirror, still dreading that the ugly visage of an old woman would meet her gaze. Meanwhile, the three gentlemen behaved in such a manner as proved that the water of the Fountain of Youth possessed some intoxicating qualities, unless, indeed, their exhilaration of spirits were merely a lightsome dizziness, caused by the sudden removal of the weight of years. Mr. Gascoigne's mind seemed to run on political topics, but whether relating to the past, present or future, could not easily be determined, since the same ideas and phrases have been in vogue these fifty years. Now he

rattled forth full-throated sentences about patriotism, national glory, and the people's right; now he muttered some perilous stuff or other, in a sly and doubtful whisper, so cautiously that even his own conscience could scarcely catch the secret; and now again he spoke in measured accents, and a deeply deferential tone, as if a royal ear were listening to his well-turned periods. Colonel Killigrew all this time had been trolling forth a jolly bottle song, and ringing his glass in symphony with the chorus, while his eyes wandered toward the buxom figure of the Widow Wycherly. On the other side of the table, Mr. Medbourne was involved in a calculation of dollars and cents, with which was strangely intermingled a project for supplying the East Indies with ice, by harnessing a team of whales to the Polar icebergs.

As for the Widow Wycherly, she stood before the mirror courtesying and simpering to her own image, and greeting it as the friend whom she loved better than all the world beside. She thrust her face close to the glass to see whether some long-remembered wrinkle or crow's-foot had indeed vanished. She examined whether the snow had so entirely melted from her hair, that the venerable cap could be safely thrown aside. At last, turning briskly away, she came with a sort of dancing step to the table.

"My dear old doctor," cried she, "pray favor me with another glass!"

"Certainly, my dear madam, certainly!" replied the complaisant doctor. "See, I have already filled the glasses."

There, in fact, stood the four glasses, brimful of this wonderful water, the delicate spray of which, as it effervesced from the surface, resembled the tremulous glitter of diamonds. It was now so nearly sunset that the chamber had grown duskier than ever, but a mild and moonlike splendor gleamed from within the vase, and rested alike on the four guests, and on the doctor's venerable figure. He sat in a high-backed, elaborately carved oaken armchair, with a gray dignity of aspect that might have well befitted that very Father Time, whose power had never been disputed save by this fortunate company. Even while quaffing the third draught of the Fountain of Youth they were almost awed by the expression of his mysterious visage.

But the next moment the exhilarating gush of young life shot through their veins. They were now in the happy prime

of youth. Age, with its miserable train of cares and sorrows and disease, was remembered only as the trouble of a dream, from which they had joyously awoke. The fresh gloss of the soul, so early lost, and without which the world's successive scenes had been but a gallery of faded pictures, again threw its enchantment over all their prospects. They felt like new-created beings, in a new-created universe.

"We are young! we are young!" they cried exultingly.

Youth, like the extremity of age, had effaced the strongly marked characteristics of middle life, and mutually assimilated them all. They were a group of merry youngsters, almost maddened with the exuberant frolicsomeness of their years. The most singular effect of their gaiety was an impulse to mock the infirmity and decrepitude of which they had so lately been the victims. They laughed loudly at their old-fashioned attire, the wide-skirted coats and flapped waistcoats of the young men, and the ancient cap and gown of the blooming girl. One limped across the floor, like a gouty grandfather; one set a pair of spectacles astride of his nose, and pretended to pore over the black-letter pages of the book of magic; a third seated himself in an armchair, and strove to imitate the venerable dignity of Dr. Heidegger. Then all shouted mirthfully, and leaped about the room. The Widow Wycherly—if so fresh a damsel could be called a widow—tripped up to the doctor's chair, with a mischievous merriment in her rosy face.

"Doctor, you dear old soul," cried she, "get up and dance with me!" And then the four young people laughed louder than ever, to think what a queer figure the poor old doctor would cut.

"Pray excuse me," answered the doctor quietly. "I am old and rheumatic, and my dancing days were over long ago. But either of these gay young gentlemen will be glad of so pretty a partner."

"Dance with me, Clara!" cried Colonel Killigrew.

"No, no, I will be her partner!" shouted Mr. Gascoigne.

"She promised me her hand fifty years ago!" exclaimed Mr. Medbourne.

They all gathered round her. One caught both her hands in his passionate grasp, another threw his arm about her waist, the third buried his hand among the glossy curls that clustered beneath the widow's cap. Blushing, panting, struggling,

chiding, laughing, her warm breath fanning each of their faces by turns, she strove to disengage herself, yet still remained in their triple embrace. Never was there a livelier picture of youthful rivalry, with bewitching beauty for the prize. Yet, by a strange deception, owing to the duskiness of the chamber, and the antique dresses which they still wore, the tall mirror is said to have reflected the figures of the three old, gray, withered grandsires, ridiculously contending for the old skinny ugliness of a shriveled grandma.

But they were young. Their burning passions proved them so. Inflamed to madness by the coquetry of the girl-widow, who neither granted nor quite withheld her favors, the three rivals began to interchange threatening glances. Still keeping hold of the fair prize, they grappled fiercely at one another's throats. As they struggled to and fro, the table was overturned, and the vase dashed into a thousand fragments. The precious water of youth flowed in a bright stream across the floor, moistening the wings of a butterfly, which, grown old in the decline of summer, had alighted there to die. The insect fluttered lightly through the chamber, and settled on the snowy head of Dr. Heidegger.

"Come, come, gentlemen—come, Madam Wycherly," exclaimed the doctor, "I really must protest against this riot."

They stood still and shivered, for it seemed as if gray Time were calling them back from their sunny youth, far down into the chill and darksome vale of years. They looked at old Dr. Heidegger, who sat in his carved armchair, holding the rose of half a century, which he had rescued from among the fragments of the shattered vase. At the motion of his hand the four rioters resumed their seats, the more readily because their violent exertions had wearied them, youthful though they were.

"My poor Sylvia's rose!" ejaculated Dr. Heidegger, holding it in the light of the sunset clouds, "it appears to be fading again."

And so it was. Even while the party were looking at it the flower continued to shrivel up, till it became as dry and fragile as when the doctor had first thrown it into the vase. He shook off the few drops of moisture which clung to its petals.

"I love it as well thus as in its dewy freshness," observed he, pressing the withered rose to his withered lips. While he

spoke the butterfly fluttered down from the doctor's snowy head, and fell upon the floor.

His guests shivered again. A strange chillness, whether of the body or spirit they could not tell, was creeping gradually over them all. They gazed at one another, and fancied that each fleeting moment snatched away a charm, and left a deepening furrow where none had been before. Was it an illusion? Had the changes of a lifetime been crowded into so brief a space, and were they now four aged people, sitting with their old friend, Dr. Heidegger?

"Are we grown old again, so soon?" cried they dolefully.

In truth they had. The water of youth possessed merely a virtue more transient than that of wine. The delirium which it created had effervesced away. Yes, they were old again. With a shuddering impulse, that showed her a woman still, the widow clasped her skinny hands before her face and wished that the coffin-lid were over it, since it could be no longer beautiful.

"Yes, friends, ye are old again," said Dr. Heidegger; "and lo! the water of youth is all lavished on the ground. Well, I bemoan it not, for if the fountain gushed at my very doorstep I would not stoop to bathe my lips in it; no, though its delirium were for years instead of moments. Such is the lesson ye have taught me!"

But the doctor's four friends had taught no such lesson to themselves. They resolved forthwith to make a pilgrimage to Florida, and quaff at morning, noon and night from the Fountain of Youth.



Anecdotes.

IN this department of short stories about people, compiled from various sources and contributed, an annual subscription to Short Stories will be given each month for the best original or selected anecdote sent in by any contributor. The Editor cannot undertake to return contributions or engage in correspondence over them. If the extract is valuable keep a copy of it. Communications should be marked "Anecdotes," care The Current Literature Publishing Co., Bryant Building, 55 Liberty St., New York, and should be signed with name or initials.

An Original Correction.

It appears that at an elementary examination in English, lately held in a school near the city, two sentences were given out to be corrected by the younger scholars. The first sentence was to be corrected as to its subject matter; the second as to its syntax. These were the sentences:

The hen has three legs.

Who done it?

When the papers were handed in it was found that one of the examinees had regarded the sentences as subtly connected in thought, for his answer was as follows:

The hen didn't done it; God done it.

BELLE E. SMITH.

(In accordance with our offer, the subscription to Short Stories for one year has been awarded Miss Belle E. Smith, care of Newton Public Library, Newton, Iowa., for the foregoing, the best anecdote contributed during the month.)

The Cardinal and the Casuist.

The casuist, who was dining with the cardinal, was famous for beginning every sentence with the phrase, "I make a distinction," and his host, wishing to "draw" him for the general entertainment, asked him, as the soup was served: "Pray, father, can you tell us if it is ever lawful to baptize in soup?" "I make a distinction, your eminence," replied the casuist; "with ordinary soup it is by no means lawful to perform baptism, but your eminence's soup is perfectly suitable, as it differs in no way from water."

E. G. B.

Beating the Railroad.

An Irishman, after questioning the ticket agent at one of the depots of

Chicago some time ago about the fare to New York, purchased a round trip ticket and went out on the platform to wait for the train. He seemed to be in quite a cheerful mood, and when asked what it was he found so amusing, replied: "I'm 'beatin' the road.' It's a round-trip ticket I've bought, and I'm not comin' back!"

K. L. J.

The Unexpected Happens.

A young lady organist in a church in Colorado was somewhat captivated with the young pastor of a church in the next street, and was delighted to hear one week that by an exchange he was to preach the next Sunday in her own church. The organ was pumped by an obstreperous old sexton, who would often stop when he thought the organ voluntary had lasted long enough. This day the organist was anxious that all should go well; and as the service was about to begin, she wrote a note intended solely for the sexton's eye. He took it, and, in spite of her agonized beckonings, carried it straight to the preacher. What was that gentleman's astonishment when he read: "Oblige me this morning by blowing away till I give you a signal to stop. MISS ALLEN."

CLARENCE FISHER.

An Unconventional Canon.

The mother superior of a convent in a little Irish town bought at the local bookseller's a volume which, being somewhat shortsighted, she thought was written by "Canon" Doyle, and for the edification of the community it was read aloud at meal times. The novices were thrilled at the freedom with which

ANECDOTES—Continued.

love-making was alluded to. "Well, well," said the mother superior, "the dear canon is preparing us for a miracle of grace. The frivolous flirt, by the mercy of heaven, no doubt ends by taking the veil." Presently, however, some one looked at the title page and discovered that the word Conan and not Canon stood printed there. "Well," said the mother superior, "the bookseller is a pious man, and now that we have paid for it, we should be wasteful not to read it."

LAWRENCE H. ADAMS.

A Juvenile Illustrator.

A teacher in the primary school of a Western city recently read to her pupils The Old Oaken Bucket. After explaining it to them very carefully, she asked them to copy the first stanza from the blackboard and try to illustrate it by drawings, as the artist illustrates a story. Pretty soon one little girl handed in her book with several little dots between two lines, a circle, half a dozen dots, and three buckets. "I do not understand this, Bessie," said the teacher. "What is that circle?" "Oh, that's the well," was the reply. "And why do you have three buckets?" "Oh, one is the oaken bucket, one is the iron-bound bucket, and the other is the bucket that hung in the well." "But what are the little dots?" "Why, those are the spots which my infancy knew."

C. F.

General Miles and the Recruit.

General Miles is, I understand, a hard man to approach, and his official position as the head of the United States army naturally commands respect from those who come in contact with him.

A day after the general landed in Porto Rico one of his orderlies was taken sick with fever and had to go to the hospital. A new man was called for and a private from a Western regiment was detailed to take the place. The recruit who showed up at headquarters somewhere up on the Great d, I think, belonged to a Wis-

consin volunteer regiment. Anyhow, to state it mildly, he was the greenest and most self-important recruit I ever saw. Along with his early schooling he must have read the clause in the Declaration of Independence that runs to the effect that all men are free and equal, and he bore himself accordingly.

The morning after he was detailed General Miles was holding a consultation at headquarters with some of the big officers of his command. The general called for an orderly to run an important errand, and the gentleman from Wisconsin sauntered in, made a pass at his hat with his left hand for a salute and ejaculated:

"Well, Miles, what is it?"

If the Spaniards had dropped a shell in our midst it would have hardly surprised us more. At first General Miles' face grew black as thunder, and then his scowl changed into a quizzical smile.

"Don't call me Miles. Call me Nelse. Miles is so formal, you know."

The gentleman from Wisconsin had meanwhile realized from the expressions on our faces what he had done, and with General Miles' answer became the most confused man I ever saw. Some one else ran his errand, a regular, I think, and the hero of my story was never seen at headquarters again.

S. Q. M.

The Deutsche Verb.

Mark Twain, in his account of the German language, tells how "the intelligent German plunges into a sea of verbiage and comes up on the other side, like a dog, with his verb in his mouth." The same idea is illustrated in a story, told in the Century, of a lady who once listened, through the aid of an interpreter, to a speech made by Bismarck. All went well for a time, as the low voice of the paintaking translator rendered with some adequacy the thought of Bismarck. Then there were short pauses, followed by rapid little summaries of what had been said. As these grew more and more frequent, the lady became ir-



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ANECDOTES—Continued.

ritated. Finally there was an entire cessation on the part of the interpreter, and yet Bismarck was going right on with ever-increasing vehemence. There were constant calls from the lady of "What's he saying? What's he saying?" and an increase of impatience proportionate to the growing violence of the speaker. Finally the wretched interpreter could endure the strain no longer, and, turning with a gesture of fierce resentment to his excited employer, he hissed: "Madam, I am waiting for the verb."

N. W. B.

Judicial Clemency.

A criminal was once sentenced by an Irish judge to imprisonment for twenty-five years. "But," said the lawyer who was defending him, "he is a sick man, and cannot live out such a sentence. Cannot you make it for a shorter term?" "Certainly," said the judge; "make it for life." R. P. G.

Logic is Logic.

Shortly before the declaration of war between America and Spain, when this country was in a state of suspense, and yellow journalism was at its height, I overheard a conversation between two bright negro lads, in the vicinity of Lombard street, Philadelphia.

They were evidently chafing under the President's delay to declare hostilities, and vented their sentiments in the following manner:

"What's Bill McKinley good fur, anyway?"

"Nuthin'."

A momentous pause.

"Wasn't Washington a good man?"

"Yah."

"Well, when dey got a good man, why don't dey keep him? What they 'lect Bill McKinley fur, anyway?"

MEM.

Considerate Fellow.

Several years ago I was working in a Northern mining town where sleeping

room was at a premium. To lessen the cost of slumber, Lou Dawes and Fred Ford, civil engineers, and Clem Vance and myself, clerks, hit upon a happy expedient. I had a cabin about six by eight with one bed in it. We bought a woven wire spring, and hung it from the roof by ropes, and so got on very nicely. The rule was "Early-to-bed" got the bedstead while the sluggards must climb to the spring overhead.

All went well until one evening when Lou and I rolled in early while Fred and Clem took in the town, also a goodly store of liquids. After many attempts to corner the entire liquor supply of the town they wended their way homeward and succeeded after many futile attempts in getting up to their lofty resting place.

We had just gotten to sleep when Fred came down with a most tremendous crash, smashed our bedstead and rolled over onto the floor without a word. Lou cried: "Speak, Fred! For God's sake, speak! Are you killed?" Fred murmured drowsily: "Didn't like to say anything. Wash 'fraid waking yer up."

WILL BARTON HOWES.

His Mistake.

An Irishman, who had purchased some chickens and placed them in his cellar for safety, one morning finding the cellar flooded and the chickens drowned, exclaimed: "What a fool I was that I didn't buy ducks."

P. R. WALSH.

A Sympathetic Interpretation.

The lesson was from the Prodigal Son, and the Sunday-school teacher was dwelling on the character of the elder brother. "But amidst all the rejoicing," he said, "there was one to whom the preparation of the feast brought no joy, to whom the prodigal's return gave no pleasure, but only bitterness; one who did not approve of the feast being held, and who had no wish to attend it. Now can any of you tell me who this was?"

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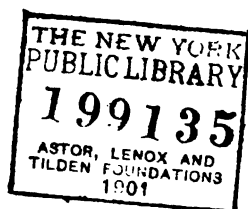
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BETTINA*

BY HELEN F. GARDNER

“**M**ADAME, I have news for you. I am engaged to be married.”

The pile of music I was looking over slipped from my knees unnoticed, as I turned to look at Bettina.

There was no embarrassment visible in her face. There was no deeper tinge of pink than usual in her fair young cheeks, and her frank brown eyes looked into mine with their accus-

*Written for Short Stories. Illustrations by Helen Maitland Armstrong.

tomed direct gaze; but the next moment her fingers trembled slightly as she tightened the strings of her violin, and the E-string suddenly snapped, making us both start, and relieving the tense silence that had followed her remark.

"Bettina," I gasped at length, "what do you mean? Are you trying to annoy me with some nonsense, or have you really committed this folly?"

"Now, madame," replied Bettina deliberately, "straighten out your face, and I'll tell you all about it. I should think it would really ache, it's so distorted with astonishment."

I closed my mouth, and tried to bring down my eyes to their natural dimensions, and then commanded sternly:

"Bettina, tell me about this, immediately. What did you mean?"

"Just what I said—I'm engaged."

"To whom?"

"To Charlie Johnson."

"And who is Charlie Johnson?"

"A bookkeeper at the store."

"What store?"

"The soap store."

"Engaged—to a bookkeeper at the soap store! Bettina——"

But Bettina knew I was going to scold, and suddenly raised her violin and began to play. She knew the power she possessed with her instrument in her hands, and she exercised it well. She could comfort, bewitch, wheedle, or appease any amount of wrath, with her magic touch on the strings and bow. I always forgot everything under the power and sweetness of her playing, and all the music worship in my soul seemed to rise up in gratitude and admiration for her talent.

After a few moments she paused, and turned to me expectantly.

"I never heard anything more dainty and beautiful!" I exclaimed. "Where did you get it? What is it?"

She tapped her forehead with the end of her bow. Then she said quietly:

"I suppose I shall compose better now I am in love."

That brought me back to the beginning of our conversation, and I commanded sternly:

"Now, Bettina, I want you to tell me all about this foolishness—everything, remember. I want you to conceal nothing."

"There isn't much to tell. You know I began writing at the

store, about three weeks ago, and he was working there. We seemed to fall in love at first sight. He has paid me some attention, and we got better acquainted, and now we're engaged. That's all there is to it."

"When will you be married? Or haven't you thought as far as that?"

"Oh, yes; we've thought and spoken of that. But Charlie'll



have to save some money, and that will take time—six months at least, I'm afraid."

"Bettina, do you realize that you are only sixteen? It isn't a delicate thing to remind you of this, but do you also realize what I have done for you, and what I have a right to expect?

You know the time and money I have put into your education, and I surely have a right to think that you should make the most of your musical talent. A marriage, such as you contemplate, would immediately put an end to your career."

"Madame, I have warned you. I love my music; but you know I have always said it would be only secondary, should I really fall in love, and that I would marry the man, whoever he might be, even if he were a bootblack. And I have tried to be as slight an expense as possible; indeed, I have often warned you that perhaps all your kindness and money would be lost upon me finally."

It was true, and her argument silenced me. As Bettina gathered up the leaves of music strewn about the room, and I arranged them in a neat pile, my mind wandered back twenty years, to the day when Bettina's father first came to me for lessons. He was a tall young man, with wonderful brown eyes, that Bettina had inherited, a magnificent physique and great musical talent.

He was poor, but had saved enough money to enable him to take a few violin lessons; his progress was marvelous, and he interested both my husband and myself, for combined with his genius as a musician, he had a simple, gentle nature, that won our friendship and respect.

One day he came to tell me that that was to be his last lesson. His mother was ill, and his increased expenses would not allow him any money for luxuries. In vain I assured him that the lessons need not be discontinued for this reason; he would accept no favors, and persistently refused the instruction he could not pay for. I did not see him for two years, and only knew that he was drifting about, at times playing in some cheap orchestra, sometimes teaching, and sometimes without either position or pupils.

One day he called and informed me that he was about to be married. He showed me a picture of the woman, and his face beamed as he told me of his happiness. She was a French chorus girl, from the theatre where he was playing, and as I looked at the photograph before me, at the good but ordinary face of the woman he had chosen for his wife, I felt a great wave of disappointment and impatience sweep over me.

"Mr. Siedhoff," I said, "you are making a great mistake. You have talent, but this will cut short your career. You are

poor, but if you marry, you will be poorer still. Then, too, you are German. Why do you marry a French woman?"

"It does not matter," he replied. "You were happy, Mme. Linnell, though your parents were French, and your husband American. The mission and meaning of music is to tell the people of this great, weary, tiresome world, about love, and express it to them. How could I tell them of it if I voluntarily threw it aside, when it comes into my life? I love Bettina, and she loves me. We must marry."

It was no use arguing with the simple-hearted, visionary fellow, who had more idealism than practical good sense, and more imagination than sound judgment.

About two years after I was one day sent for in a great hurry, and conveyed by the messenger to a poor part of the city, where I found poor Franz Siedhoff dying of pneumonia, the result of a cold contracted while playing in a street band, in December. He was greatly changed, for his splendid frame had sadly diminished in flesh and vigor, but his beautiful eyes were the same. His wife had died some months before, and he had sent for me to beg me to take care of their baby girl, Bettina, who would be left alone. The mother had left her a little property, which he assured me would help pay for her baby requirements. I promised, and the next day, after seeing poor Franz close his great brown eyes for the last sleep, I took the little one home with me.

My husband had died three years before, and my life and interest were entirely absorbed in my teaching and concert work. At first I thought I would keep little Bettina with me, but I soon found that plan was not feasible. She was a troublesome baby, cried incessantly while I was giving lessons, persisted in screaming lustily at the most inopportune times, and not being sufficiently attractive in appearance to overbalance these evil proclivities—she had a nose and mouth much too small, with eyes several sizes larger than nature usually provides for babies—I decided to send her into the country to be boarded by a kind, worthy woman I had known for many years.

I did not see Bettina for seven years. Then being rather tired out, and threatened with nervous prostration, I decided to go into the country to board. I remembered my charge, and made up my mind to spend the summer at the dear old farmhouse, where her little life had been passed.

I never shall forget my first glimpse of her. She was in the

barn, standing in a wheel-barrow, with chairs and barrels arranged about her, conducting an imaginary orchestra. In one hand she held a violin, made from a bandbox cover, with strings of waxed twine.



Her pale gold hair was brushed back from a sweet, eager little face, and when she heard my step she turned toward me a pair of eyes that seemed Franz Siedhoff's own, in their soft brownness and gentle entreaty. The next instant there was a flash in them that I had never seen in her father's—for Bettina objected to being interrupted by strangers—and she had a decided little mind of her own.

All that summer I taught her music, and she made wonderful progress. I found her nature a strange medley of gentleness and independence, dreamy idealism and self-sufficient decisiveness.

In the fall I took her home with me, and found her a boarding place near my rooms, for my life was such a busy one that I thought it best to make her home outside, and taught her constantly. I grew to love the child, and my ambition for her became my chief thought, for I realized that she had talents almost, if not quite, amounting to genius, and that some day my young pupil would be a famous violinist.

She never seemed particularly impressed when I talked to her of her future, and my ambition for her. She worked eagerly and faithfully, was delighted over her successes at musicales, or when she played for my friends, but often warned me that she would throw it all aside, should she fall in love. I sometimes felt slightly disturbed after she had talked in this way, and asked myself if she was really going to disappoint me as her father had before her. Would blood tell in this respect? Would she inherit that recklessness regarding her future prospects, and be guided merely by the dictates of her heart?

She met many men, brilliant and talented, but both they and I still looked upon her as a child.

When she had reached the age of fifteen she informed me that she was old enough to contribute toward her support. I argued in vain. She began embroidering for a few art stores, and her beautiful work brought in a small income, which she dutifully sent me every week. What was my consternation, a

few months after, when she informed me one morning, after finishing her lesson, that she had obtained a position in a store, at writing, several hours each day.

"It will pay better than embroidery," she told me, "and not be so hard on the eyes, either."

"What kind of a store is it?" I asked.

"A soap and perfume store. It is a pleasant place, though rather small; but it smells lovely."

This engagement to the young man bearing the name of Charlie Johnson was the result. That morning, after telling me of this news, the lesson was almost a failure. I could not teach, and Bettina could not seem to learn.

At last I took her instrument from her hands, and told her that we would give it up for that morning.

"Come this afternoon, Bettina," I said.

"It is Charlie's afternoon off," she answered. "I was going to ask you if I might bring him here to call."

I was rather taken aback; but after a moment's reflection, decided to say yes.

"Bring him, Bettina," I said; "but don't hope for my approval."

"Oh, you'll like him," she said confidently, as she closed her violin case. "You can't help it. Only you mustn't fall in love, too."

That afternoon, about four o'clock, my bell rang. It was a very meek little ring, and I knew it was not Bettina's touch. She usually held her finger on the button till my maid had almost reached the door, for Bettina showed the decision and thoroughness when ringing a bell that she did at all other times, and this faint tinkle was caused by a very slight, modest pressure.

"I'm glad Charlie's meek," I thought; "he'll be easier to reduce."

The next moment I heard Bettina's voice in the front room, and not giving myself time to surmise further, I hurried in.

Her face was radiant with pride and happiness. Never had I seen her look more bewitchingly pretty than at that moment, for she had dressed up in honor of the occasion in her most becoming costume, a navy blue and white plaid suit, and a large blue hat trimmed coquettishly with blue and white plumes, above her bright young face.

She tried to be very dignified as she greeted me.

"Madame, this is Mr. Johnson; Charlie, my dear friend, Mme. Linnell."

"How do you do?" said Mr. Johnson.

He was a tall, rather slight young man. His blonde hair was brushed so smooth that in that first moment of seeing him I thought of a threat used years and years before by my old nurse: "Be good, Felice, or I'll pin back your ears and butter your head." Charlie's head looked as though it had been buttered.

His blue eyes looked into mine with childish curiosity. His blonde moustache was curled for this grand occasion, till its ends looked like the mainspring of a watch; but beneath it was a mouth shaped like a cupid's bow, and I saw the lips were slightly tremulous with nervousness, and anxiety to make a good impression. Altogether, his smooth, dapper appearance and painful embarrassment, made me think of a comic opera soldier, who has reached the stage, and finds he has forgotten his sword and uniform.

I bowed coldly, then his almost beseeching look as he uttered that meek, commonplace, "How do you do?" made me really pity him, and I extended my hand with some show of cordiality.

Bettina's face beamed with joy.

"I knew how you'd like each other," she exclaimed delightedly as she removed her hat and jacket. "This is the room, Charlie, where I've taken all my lessons, and put in hours and hours of practice, haven't I, madame?"

I nodded.

"Are you fond of music?" I asked Mr. Johnson.

His embarrassment caused him to swallow very often, and gasp a little while conversing.

"Yes, thank you," he replied. "I suppose I don't really appreciate it, though. I can't tell Chopin," he pronounced it Choppin, "from Annie Rooney."

"I'll teach him," said the incorrigible Bettina. "Poor Charlie, you've never heard much music, except from hand organs and traveling pianos."

He cast upon her a look of perfect adoration, and my spirits sank, as I saw her give him one in return, just as adoring.

"Has your home always been in New York?" I queried.

"Yes; you'd almost know by the way I roll my Rs;" he

paused, then added in a burst of eloquence, "There's always something going on in New York. I spent a few months with my grandmother in the country once after having the measles, and I didn't like it."

"Didn't like what?" asked Bettina. "The measles or the country?"

"The country; that is, I meant the country. But I didn't like the measles, either. The country is too quiet. I guess the birds and flowers don't appeal to me. Do you like the country, Bettina?"

"Yes, indeed, I do," replied that young lady with enthusiasm. "I like the quiet and the fields, and oh, the pigs! I do love to feed pigs!"

Conversation began to languish slightly.

"Your business is bookkeeping, I believe, Mr. Johnson?" I asked at length. "Do you like the work?"

"Very much; especially now that I have an assistant," and he laughed, and cast a fond look in Bettina's direction.

"I've done it so many years that I don't mind the confinement, though I did at first. Then I like writing and figuring."

"He says my writing looks like a schoolgirl's," complained Bettina. "If there's any of my work that's very particular, he does it; then he helps me out with the hard figuring, and adds all the long columns for me."

Mr. Johnson blushed painfully, and murmured that "it was sometimes very hard for a genius to do the easy, commonplace things in life."

We rambled on in this harmless and highly entertaining fashion for an hour or more, and finally my guests rose to depart.

"Stay to dinner with me," I said. "I shall be alone."

"Thank you," said Mr. Johnson, "but my mother expects me home to dinner, and I must not disappoint her."

"Charlie's awfully good to his mother," murmured Bettina.

"I was planning to take her and Bettina to the theatre to-night," he said.

"Then leave Bettina here to dine with me," I replied, "and call for her later."

He looked at Bettina for approval of my plan, and she nodded. I saw she was anxious to remain that she might hear what I thought of Mr. Johnson.

When he had taken his departure Bettina and I seated ourselves on the long couch in my music-room, and she tucked the pillows round me and then round herself, eyeing me expectantly during the proceeding, for she was evidently anticipating a burst of enthusiasm from me.

However, I remained silent for a long time, and at last in sheer desperation she asked:

"Well, madame, isn't he all that I said?"

Even then I did not speak at once, but at last replied:

"He is probably a very fine young man, Bettina, but I may as well tell you frankly that I am terribly disappointed in your choice."

She looked surprised, and for a moment there was a hurt expression on her face; but Bettina never looked grieved for very long. The next moment she was defiant.

"He is a fine fellow, and if you had met him under other circumstances you would have said so. You are prejudiced, and cannot judge fairly. If we talk things over we will only disagree, and I think I'd better go."

She flew off the couch and began putting on her jacket, tucking in her dress sleeves with great vehemence.

"Bettina," I said, "don't be childish. Sit down again, and listen to me. I think you will admit that I have done enough for you to deserve a little consideration. I have told you frankly that I am bitterly disappointed, and I also tell you that I shall make every effort to cause you to change your mind. You may be obstinate, but I trust you will see things as I do in time. I have been making some plans, and I will tell you what they are. I will arrange to have you come here to live—not with me, I am too busy; your life with me would not be bright and happy. You know my young friend, Miss Brooks, the artist, here in this same building—her flat is next to this. I will make arrangements to have you live with her, in her rooms. She has plenty of young company, and goes out a great deal. I will give you a lesson every other day, so you will have plenty of practice to claim your attention. I will try to make your life as busy and happy as one as any girl could desire, and you, in your turn, must try to forget this Mr. Johnson. I tell you, Bettina, if you persist in this union and marry that man, you will be sorry all your life. He may be kind-hearted and have plenty of other estimable qualities, but in a few years you would be as uncongenial as Paderewski

married to my laundry woman. Now, my dear, do be reasonable."

"I think you're aw—awfully unkind," sobbed Bettina. "You have no idea how splendid he is, and how much we are attached to each other. He may not be as bril—brilliant as some people, but he's very clever in some directions. He can talk about the man—manufacture of soap and perfumery, just as well as you talk about music, and that subject would be just as interesting to half the people in the world."

I continued to argue and plead, and at last she seemed to yield. She could eat no dinner, and was almost ill with her distress and indignation. But as the time approached for Mr. Johnson to arrive, and she put on her hat and jacket to be ready for him, she promised me that she would give up her position at the store immediately, and also, should I make arrangements with Miss Brooks, that she would take possession of her new home the first of the following week.

Another fear suddenly struck me.

"Bettina," I said, "you will not marry Mr. Johnson to-night, will you?"

Her face lighted up.

"I hadn't thought of that."

"Promise me, Bettina."

She hesitated.

"Bettina, you shall not go 'till you have promised me."

There was defiance written in every line of her face.

"Bettina," I said sternly, "promise me immediately."

There was a long pause, and then she said quietly:

"I promise."

"I also want you to promise me that you will not do anything of the sort within six months."

She was silent again, then her face softened, and she sobbed:

"I promise—I promise, madame; but please, please try to like Charlie, for I will never give him up."

On the following Monday Bettina moved into her new quarters, and it was with a great feeling of relief that I saw her located where I could keep a watchful eye over her. She arranged her things with a listless apathy, very unlike her usual eagerness and delight in new situations. She brightened up a little when she stepped into the pleasant room Miss Brooks had assigned for her occupancy, and saw the pretty set of curly maple with which I had furnished it, and the toilet articles on

the dresser, all in solid silver, which I knew she had wanted for a long time.

"There has not been time to have them marked," I said, "but I will have it done this week. I wanted to see first if you liked the pattern."

"You are very kind, madame, but I would really be happier if you would do less for me. Won't you take the silver set for yourself?"

"Nonsense, Bettina," I replied, "it is for you. Are you satisfied with the pattern, so I can have it engraved?"

She looked me directly in the eyes.

"I really think it isn't worth while to have an 'S' put on them," she said gravely.

I gave Miss Brooks explicit directions in regard to Bettina. She was to be made as happy as possible, was to practice when she chose, and no more than she chose. Her mail was not to be intercepted, but Mr. Johnson must not be admitted to her rooms, and Bettina was not to go out alone. Miss Brooks must always find some pretext for accompanying her, unless she should go out with me.

All that winter I was Bettina's devoted slave.

I gave her a liberal allowance of pocket money. She had twice the supply of clothes she ever had before. I bought her every trinket a young girl could desire. I got two season tickets to the opera, and accompanied her to every performance, neglecting my own engagements. Every musicale and concert to which I could obtain an invitation for her she attended with me. Miss Brooks had a wheel, and I bought one for Bettina. Never was a girl more indulged and pampered than my little protégée, Bettina Siedhoff.

In return she worked hard at her music, and delighted me with the progress she made. Twenty times a day I would stand with my ear close to the partition that separated Miss Brooks' flat from my own and listen to Bettina practicing. Even with that barrier of brick and plaster between us the power and sweetness of her playing would thrill through every fibre of my being, and I would often say to myself:

"She is a genius—a genius! Oh, God, grant that she may make the most of her talent!"

Bettina never mentioned Mr. Johnson's name to me. I had not forbidden her doing so, but there seemed to be a tacit understanding between us on the subject. She often begged me

not to do so much for her, and sometimes she slipped back into my hand the money I gave her, saying it was not right for her to take so much, I might only be sorry sometime; but I pretended not to understand, and persisted in the course I had begun.

One day after her lesson she said:

"Miss Brooks has a lovely new desk—a mahogany one."

"Would you like one?" I asked.

She shook her head.

"It will be your birthday next Wednesday, Bettina," I said, "and I have been wondering what I should get you. How would you like a desk?"

She was nervously twisting round her fingers the tassel of a down cushion.

"It makes me very uncomfortable, madame," she replied after a long pause, to have you so generous to me."

"Bettina," I said earnestly, "you know why I do all this—you know how deeply interested I am in your future. All I ask, my dear, is that you will keep on working and carve out for yourself the career I anticipate for you."

"You don't feel any different, then, in regard to—to—to Charlie, of course?"

"No, Bettina; certainly not, and I never shall. You know my ideas on that subject, and they will never change."

"Are you quite sure, madame?"

"Of course, I am sure; and I would prefer never to revert to the subject again, Bettina."

Bettina's next lesson was very unsatisfactory. She showed lack of practice and lack of attention. I was accustomed to this from my other pupils, but from her it exasperated me.

"What is the matter, Bettina?" I exclaimed at length. "I



never heard you play so badly. Are you ill, or have you anything on your mind?"

She turned to me with a strange, desperate look in her expressive eyes; then, after what seemed a long, long silence, she said quietly, deliberately:

"I have something I must tell you, madame. I was married yesterday to Charlie Johnson."

At the same moment she laid her violin in its case, and closed it quickly, then, without glancing at me, adjusted her large plumed hat before my mirror and began to put on her jacket.

As for me, I was passing through rapidly succeeding varied sensations that I had never experienced before. I did not doubt her word for an instant, and I felt first a wave of despair—all my time, money, patience and work, expended on this ungrateful girl, had resulted in nothing; then I was seized with a perfect frenzy of indignation. I suddenly rose from the couch where I had been seated, and taking Bettina by the shoulders I shook her till her teeth chattered.

"You're a wilful, selfish, ungrateful child," I exclaimed, "and you never deserved what I have given you. You should have been left in the streets, where you belonged."

When I released her from my grasp she seated herself in a large chair to catch her breath, then calmly finished buttoning her jacket.

"There's no need of getting so excited," she said at length. "I haven't deceived you; you know how many times I've warned you all my life."

"You lied to me. You promised to wait six months."

"The six months were up the day before yesterday, and you remember what you said that day. You would never have given your consent, and, in the meantime, Charlie and I are getting older all the time."

"I am your guardian, and you are under age, Bettina."

"You were never legally appointed," she replied. "It was merely a case of confidence on my father's side and kindness on yours."

I felt strangely helpless; then I asked, as a new thought struck me:

"How did you manage, Bettina? I told Miss Brooks never to allow you to go out alone."

"She wouldn't—for a long time. I invented all sorts of pre-

texts, but none of them worked; then one night I played to her, and after that I made her promise that I might go out the next day. You know I can usually persuade people when I play. I did it several times—would play something pathetic, and first she'd cry, and then I'd ask her. You mustn't blame her—you know you always used to yield when I played."

There was a long pause, and then I said:

"Bettina, you may go now—I never care to see you again. If you should ever think of me in the future, you may remember that I was the best friend you ever had, but you forfeited all my love and interest, gave me trouble and disappointment, and, Bettina, almost broke my heart."

I knew from the expression in her beautiful eyes that she longed to ask my forgiveness, but she dared not. She looked straight in my face for a moment, then came quietly to where I was standing, and raised my hand to her lips. She took one long look about the room, and her eyes rested on a little stand by the window, where her picture stood. She slipped the picture from the frame, and threw it on the fire blazing in the open grate. Then once more she glanced lingeringly around the room where she had spent so many hours in patient practice, and which had seemed to me almost a sacred temple for her god-like genius, took her violin case in her hand and walked quietly out and down the stairs.

I heard the outside door close, and at the same moment life seemed to leave me. Everything grew dark and unsteady, and blessed relief came to me in the guise of a dead faint.

* * * * *

I did not see Bettina for three years. During that time I worked harder than ever before—not because of great ambition or need of money, but to drown the weary loneliness of my life. And every day I seemed to see myself changing, growing older, thinner, grayer, harder and more cynical.

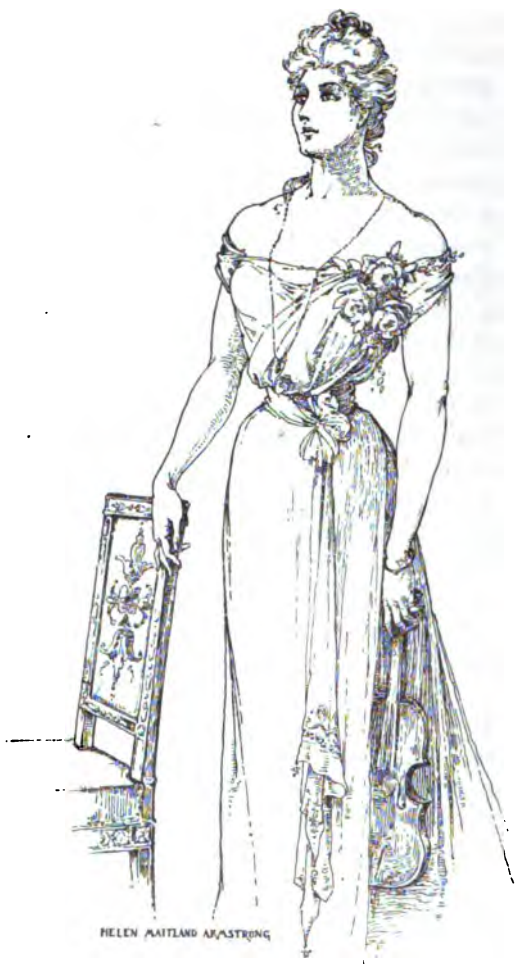
One night I attended a musicale given by a wealthy woman, who, unlike most of her class, had a really sincere, intelligent love for music. Soon after my arrival she approached me and said:

"I am very anxious for you to hear the artiste of the evening. I want your verdict, for, although she has no reputation as a musician, I think she is a perfect little wonder."

"Who is she, and what does she play?" I asked.

"She is a violinist ; but her name will mean nothing to you, for I believe she is utterly unknown. She is going to play now. Listen !"

There were a few strains of music, and then I sprang to my feet and pushed my way through the people in the hall where I had been seated, that I might catch a glimpse of the player.



She was standing at one end of the long drawing-room, and I could just see her from the hall door.

It was Bettina. I would have recognized her playing had I heard it in the Antipodes. Bettina—my pupil, with her deep musical instinct and divine touch on the instrument she loved.

Bettina, older, more serious, matured in face and form, but just as bewitching.

Everybody was enthusiastic when she had finished playing, and she began another selection in response to the applause.

I don't know what it was that she played, but something so sweet, so tender, so beseeching, that I felt the tears rush to my eyes, and retreated precipitately to the stairs, that I might not disgrace myself in public.

A few moments after she passed from the drawing-room into the hall, and when I saw that she was quite alone I hurried down to speak to her. I, who have always boasted the strongest presence of mind, felt all my self-command leave me in that moment, and I only said in the weakest voice :

"Bettina, I want to speak with you."

She turned, and gave a little cry of surprise.

"Madame, is it you? Oh, I wish I had words to tell you how glad I am to see you, and have you speak to me."

She put both her hands in mine, and her lips trembled, as she looked straight into my eyes, with all her old directness.

"Tell me about yourself, Bettina," I said. "Sit on the stairs with me a moment, and let's talk fast, for you will have to play again very soon."

"I hardly know where to begin," she said, smiling up at me from the stair at my side. "I am very well, and have been so since I last saw you. We are keeping house, and I have a little girl, six months old. Charlie has been very ill with typhoid fever; I thought at one time"—and her voice trembled—"that we couldn't pull him through; but he's gaining now. His illness has, of course, made great expense for us, so I tried to get a few engagements like this to-night. These people pay good prices, and I have been quite fortunate, for this is my second musicale, and I already have another for next month. Won't you come to see me, madame? I want you to see my baby."

"Yes," I replied. "Give me your address, Bettina, and I will call to-morrow. Now you must play again, and I am going to the opera to-night, so cannot stay longer."

She gave me her address, and I went upstairs for my outer garments, feeling that the world had changed for me during the hour spent at the musicale.

The next morning at an hour altogether too early for calling

I made my way to Bettina's address, for I felt that I simply could not wait.

It was a respectable and unusually cheerful flat building, and in accordance with the directions given me the night before I climbed two flights of stairs to the third floor. I heard the sounds of a violin—not Bettina's—issuing from the front room, and presumed that she must be giving a lesson. Two doors led from the little hall, one to the parlor and one to the dining-room, I judged. Not wishing to interrupt the lesson I tapped at the dining-room door.

It was opened by a little maid of fifteen or sixteen years, in a white cap and apron. I thought of a remark made by Bettina several years before, that "she adored maids in white caps and aprons."

The girl took my card, and a moment after ushered me into the dining-room.

"Mrs. Johnson is giving a lesson," she said, "but here's Mr. Johnson."

He was seated in a large chair by the window, but rose as I entered, and held out a very thin, blue veined hand.

He had greatly changed. His eyes were sunken, his face emaciated, and his hair grown long during his illness, added to his haggard, unearthly appearance; but his voice had a deep, manly ring, and his thin hand the firm pressure of cordiality as he said:

"We are very glad to see you here, Mme. Linnell. We have often wished for it—Bettina and I. Mary, bring madame Bettina's rocking-chair from the front room."

All his old embarrassment and awkwardness had vanished from his manner. He was quiet, self-possessed and manly in every word he said.

After a few moments' conversation, he said:

"I suppose I must not show you our baby; Bettina must have that pleasure. Of course, she told you that we named her for you. She is little Felice."

"Bettina did not tell me," I replied. I could not say more just then.

"I do not wonder that you were fearfully disappointed when she married me," he said at length. "I wonder now at my own audacity in trying to make her like me; but, madame, if ever a man struggled to make himself in some degree worthy of the woman he loved, I have. I never can be worthy—her

genius places her among the gods; but I believe that after all I make her happy. She has such a noble, loving heart."

Just then the door opened, and Bettina came into the room. She kissed me, and then turned to her husband:

"That stupid pupil is through. Oh, but she's a dummy! Charlie Johnson, you got up out of that chair, and the doctor told you not to stir. I know it was to greet madame. Now, sir, politeness in invalids is wholly uncalled for and ridiculous. It's time for your medicine, isn't it, dear?"

Her husband's eyes followed her about the room, and then, as she vanished into the sleeping-room, at the sound of an infantile wail, he glanced at me and sighed deeply, as though he could find no words to express his ardent admiration, but wished that I would say something.

* * * * *

I have just come from Bettina's cosy flat, where I have been spending the day. Charlie has greatly improved in health since my first visit to their home, and has returned to his business, though Bettina says she allows him to work only a few hours a day.

My namesake, Felice, is a pretty baby, not half as troublesome as was her mother at the same age. I am trying hard not to get very fond of her, but seem to find it impossible to allow a day to pass without seeing her, or sending some small gift—principally rubber articles at present—to her baby-

ship. This afternoon I asked Bettina a question that would have been cruel had I not felt sure of her answer.

"Bettina," I asked, "are you never sorry for the step you took? Do you never long for a professional career?"

She shook her head decidedly, and said without a moment's hesitation:



"I am perfectly happy. The other day, when you were here, you left a musical magazine behind, and I read it all through. I seemed to realize more than ever how very unsatisfactory that life is, and how little it really counts. In a few years the public, which grows tiring as an old favorite for a new one, and then all the glory is over. The public is like a great schoolboy, whose taste for amusement changes with the seasons. When it is spring he likes marbles, and marbles he must have, if they take all his pocket money and every valued trinket he possesses. A little later he is ready for a bat, ball, and throws aside his marbles or exchanges them for a bat, and is just as enthusiastic over that as he was over the first game. It isn't pleasant for the marbles to be cast disdainfully aside, nor for the ball bat to be split into kindling wood when the football season begins—"

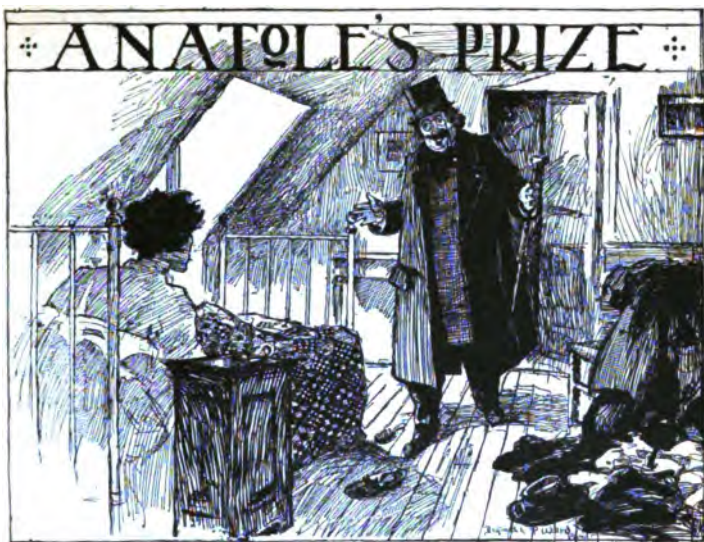
"Bettina," I said, "you're talking nonsense."

"I know it," she replied, laughing; "but the fact remains that I am absolutely necessary to Charlie and Felice Johnson, and that is much better than being a favorite with a selfish child for a little time. Perhaps, though, madame, Felice will have talent, and not be so disappointing as I was. Perhaps, when she is old enough, you will teach her."

"No," I replied, decidedly. "I shall not. My ambition has had quite enough downfalls."

And yet, I know that if Bettina should ask me that when Felice is older, and if she should play to me when she asks, I would yield, as I always have yielded when Bettina played.





BY LEONARD LIEBLING

IT was the occasion of the annual musical competition at the Paris Conservatoire. Were it not for the extreme vivacity of its occupants the closely crowded Salle might have been compared with the traditional sardine-box. The candidates for premier honors in singing, piano and declamation had been heard, adjudged and applauded, yet the perspiring, enthusiastic audience remained seated, and looked expectantly at the platform occupied by the august director, M. Thomas, and his illustrious colleagues, MM. St. Saens, Massenet, Marsick and Guilmant.

Mopping his distinguished forehead the director arose and instantly a chorus of "pssts" drowned all further conversation on the part of the audience.

"The candidates for violoncello," briefly announced M. Thomas, and loud applause greeted the two young men who stepped forward.

A hush fell on the audience as the opening notes of Romberg's second concerto were played on the piano, and a mur-

mer of approval greeted the violoncellist, who whipped out the initial chords with firm, full attack and graceful, commanding bowing.

Gradually, as the composition became more intricate, many glances were directed towards the second candidate, who sat facing the audience, smiling unconcernedly whenever his roving eyes met the gaze of an acquaintance. There was something in the smile of the blonde, curly-headed youth which kindled sympathy, for when his features expressed mirth many in the audience smiled also, though they did not even know him. The difficult finale of the concerto elicited loud cries of "bon," "très bien" from the more susceptible listeners, whereupon the blonde Anatole put his tongue in his cheek, and cocking his head on one side, looked so very quizzically at the demonstrative offenders, that they instantly became quiet, while his friends tittered audibly.

"M. Anatole Bécard, if you please," requested the director, after the first candidate had left the platform.

Anatole's jolly, indifferent demeanor had given place to an air of rapt ecstasy. During the hymn-like introductory meas-



ures, his eyes seemed riveted on space, as though he were gradually forgetting his prosaic surroundings. Then he began, softly, almost timidly, with a tone which quivered like the voice of a woman. A melody, beautiful in itself, followed the sustained note, and Anatole poured forth his whole fervent musical soul into the wondrous andante, that flowed from under his bow like one long stream of golden, liquid, mellifluous song. With hardly any interlude the character of the music changed, and the slow movement led into a rollicking tarantella; then it was that the young virtuoso re-

vealed the full measure of his artistic temperament. His deft fingers fairly flew over the strings; the waltzing, sparkling theme and its scintillating variations came forth with such vim

and dash that even the veteran musicians on the jury felt their hearts jump into their throats. The extraordinary performance was rewarded with tumultuous applause, and a veritable whirlwind of acclamation greeted M. Thomas' official announcement :

"The 'Premier Prix' for violoncello, consisting of 500 francs, or, at the discretion of the Board of Directors, a violoncello worth at least that amount, has been unanimously awarded to M. Anatole Bécard."

The fortunate young artist was the recipient of an ovation such as only a popular student receives from his fellows. Flushed, delighted, Anatole cried out :

"Thanks, thanks, boys! Meet me at the Café France in half an hour; you all dine with me—and drink. Monnet, tell old Brisson to give us his best, at five francs 'per couvert,' " and with that he dashed away.

Having thrown his instrument on the bed, exchanged his starched bow for a white flowing scarf, and his dress coat for a soiled velvet jacket, Anatole lighted a cigarette and hurried from his room to join his waiting friends at M. Brisson's Café France.

There pandemonium seemed to have broken loose. The entire first floor had been given over to the students, and these, to the number of thirty-five or forty, were seated about a long table that stretched through two adjoining rooms. Struggling waiters screamed at the uproarious guests. The latter, nothing daunted, shouted defiant replies, and mingled with the hoarse concert of these contending voices arose snatches of song, exuberant greetings and demonstrative conversations at long range.

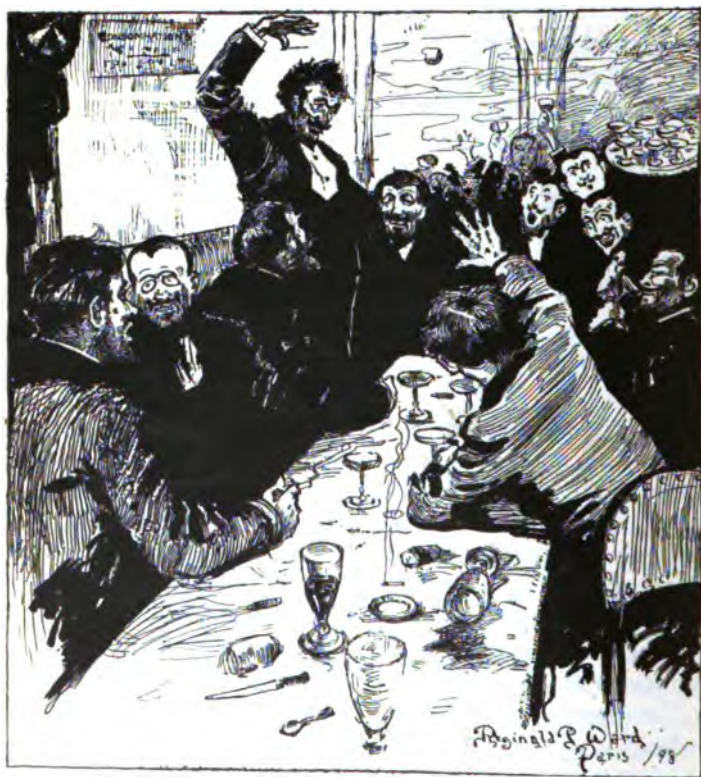
"Gentlemen, gentlemen," pleaded stout little M. Brisson, making use of the most effective word in his vocabulary—a word which, by dint of skilful vocal modulation, was made to signify anger, pleasure, exhortation or approval, as necessity required—"Gentlemen, gentlemen," pleaded M. Brisson in a tearful voice, running up and down the centre of his establishment, not forgetting in his anguish, however, to dodge cleverly the missiles of bread and cake aimed at his round fat head.

Three cheers were given when Anatole entered the room, then three for M. Brisson, three for Monnet, who was master of ceremonies, and three for anybody and everybody whose name was mentioned.

The courses, interspersed with songs, jests and speeches, were dispatched almost as soon as served, so that in a very short time nobody was in the least hungry, but all displayed illimitable thirst.

Anatole's orders for champagne assumed such magnitude that M. Brisson felt himself called upon to enter a mild protest.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," he admonished.



"A host must never interfere with his guests," hiccupped Anatole, rumpling the proprietor's thin hair. "He should look pleasant and act as though his bill were already paid."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," piped M. Brisson in some alarm, "I hope——"

"No cause for worry, dear, good Brisson," assured Anatole; "you know that I receive 500 francs in the morning——"

"Or a violoncello," interposed the cautious proprietor.

"Nonsense," asserted Monnet, pulling the proprietor's neck-

tie until it hung down his back. "Since the past eight years the board has always voted the money prize."

"Isn't my credit good here?" sputtered Anatole.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," assuaged M. Brisson.

"Shut up! We're not gentlemen, we're students," interrupted Monnet.

"Isn't my credit good?" repeated Anatole.

"M. Bécard receives one hundred francs monthly from home. Already he owes me one hundred and twenty francs, and that with to-night's bill will amount to four hundred and——"

"I'll pay it all in the morning," assured Anatole, "only bring us something more to drink."

"But how can I know—a pledge——"

"Here is my watch," spoke the violoncellist grandiloquently, "and I am sure," he added, turning to the others, "that these gentlemen put enough faith in my honor to add their valuables to mine."

A tray filled with various articles of jewelry was soon handed to M. Brisson, whereupon the waiters were given "carte blanche."

At four o'clock in the morning Anatole and Monnet finally left the board. Most of the guests had gone home, and the remainder were asleep in their chairs.

"Just exactly five hundred francs," reminded M. Brisson, as the two friends, arm in arm, floated through the doorway.

"In the morning!" shouted Anatole, waving his adieux.

"In the morning," echoed Monnet.

At noon next day Anatole was awakened from a deep slumber by a vigorous push in the ribs.

"I'll pay—in the morning," he mumbled.

"Get up, get up! M. Thomas is at the door. He wishes to see you. I told him——"

The name acted like a cold douch.

"M. Thomas—the director—here?" asked Anatole, sitting upright and blinking painfully at the landlady.

"Yes—yes; and he's coming upstairs. I told him you are ill—you must see him."

"I suppose I must—ah, the money!" he added, his eyes brightening. "In a little while I'll be able to settle my account with you, Mama Bertin."

"No hurry; but comb your hair a bit," said good old

Madame Bertin, hastening away to escort the great man to the little attic room.

Anatole dashed water in his face, and tore out several dozen hairs, trying in frenzied haste to comb his tangled hair before the director appeared.

He had barely time to slip back into bed before M. Thomas entered the room, and came towards him.

"Good morning, Monsieur Anatole," said he cheerily. "I'm sorry to hear that you are not well. Nothing serious, I hope?"



"Oh, no," answered the mock patient, "only a headache—the excitement of yesterday—the heat—and nervousness—that's all."

"Of course, of course," assented the director. "I might have thought of it. That won't last, especially after I have delivered the message of which I am the happy bearer. You surprised us all yesterday, Monsieur Anatole. No, no, credit where it is due," hastened M. Thomas in answer to the young man's deprecatory gesture; "the board is delighted, and declares that not since eight years has the 'premier prix' been so well earned; and to show our appreciation we have voted you an extraordinary prize."

"Oh, Monsieur le Directeur!" was all Anatole could say, blushing with surprise and pleasure. Already, in his mind's

eye, he had paid M. Brisson as well as the landlady, and had a handsome surplus besides.

"Jean!" called M. Thomas, going to the door. "Yes," he continued, turning towards Anatole, "we have made this departure because we believe it is well grounded. We are convinced that rather than spoil you, it will impel you to further diligence and renewed ambition. You have the true spirit, my boy, and we look on your future with confidence and pride."

Anatole heard only the end of this speech, for he had been busily speculating on the probable amount of the "extraordinary" prize.

"Jean," again called the director, and the "portier" of the conservatoire stepped into the room. "Bring it in," requested M. Thomas.

With bated breath Anatole watched the door, and there was a momentary pause.

"The board has decided to award you, instead of the customary prize of 500 francs——"

"Yes?" breathed Anatole, eagerly, as Jean came into the doorway.

"A magnificent Italian violoncello, in a walnut case, decorated with a silver plate, bearing your full name."

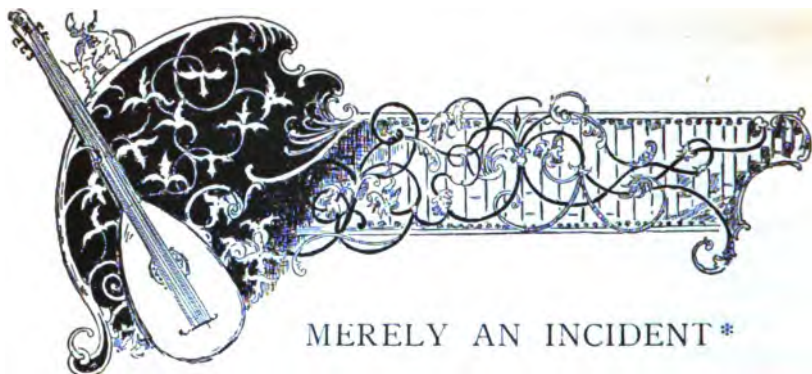
Anatole tried to speak, but could not. M. Thomas and Jean hurried out. At the door the genial director whispered to Madame Bertin:

"He's overcome with joy. I fled to escape his thanks."

In his room Anatole was leaning out of the window, bawling:

"Idiots! Imbeciles!"





MERELY AN INCIDENT *

BY JULIA P. DABNEY

THE sun beat down with an intolerable yellow glare over the landscape, which seemed to condense it and fling it back to the sky.

Through the desolated canefields and the wilds there wound down the valley the yellow sinuous trail of a road, whereon great clouds of dust would anon rise and fly gustily up the way, only to separate the four ways of heaven and subside again to nothingness.

Beside the road, a little back from it, there stood one of the ordinary countrymen's houses—an elementary structure of bamboo poles, boarded with palm-boards and thatched with the leaves of this universally useful plant.

Outside there was a rude piazza of similar construction, and before this there grew an immense ceiba tree, its broad, velvety foliage throwing a screen of shade over the whole place. On the piazza, lazily lounging upon two chairs, there sat a man. He was dark of complexion, betraying cross-blood. In his mouth he held a half-smoked cigar, and upon his knee there lay a guitar upon which he idly strummed from time to time. About him there was a superlative air of tropical repose; and in the tropics one day, one hour, is another—except sometimes!

Presently he removed his cigar and began to sing :

“Dejad llorar a las nubes,
Dejad alumbrar al sol,
Dejad al viejo quejarse
Y al mozo gozar su amor.”*

The words of the refrain dissipated themselves languidly upon the air. As they ended a woman came to the door.

“You are very merry,” she remarked sarcastically. “Do you put yourself in the ranks of the old man or the lover?”

He made no other reply than a lazy grunt, and, coming further out upon the piazza, she shaded her eyes and gazed up and down the road. She was young and handsome in the dark, voluptuous type of the island.

“What are you looking for—a lover?” the man inquired, imitating her sarcastic tones.

“Oh, I am looking for anything which will pass a few moments of time. This is the most tedious place I ever got into. How long are you going to stay?” He shrugged his shoulders.

“Any place is good where one can make trade.”

“Oh, and this hole is such a probable one for trade.”

“Why not? Behold some customers even now.”

Up the road, emerging in a cloud of their own dust, some horsemen could be seen galloping toward the little wayside house. As they came nearer the girl put on a smiling, expectant look. A second woman came to the door and looked out also. She was older than the first and stouter, but they looked much alike, and were evidently sisters.

“Are those not the ‘guerrilleros’ that were here last week?” she inquired.

“‘Toma!’” retorted the other. “What are your eyes made of? That is Don Juan Chispa, the finest fellow in all Lacerda’s troop.”

“You have too much tongue, Rosita,” was the elder woman’s comment; but she watched with quite as much interest as the younger the approach of the horsemen. It was now perceivable that there were four of these—high-booted and heavily armed gentry. As they reached the shade of the ceiba tree and flung themselves, panting, from their saddles,

*“Let the clouds weep if they will
Let the great sun flame above,
Let the old man growl his fill,
And the young enjoy his love.”

the man on the piazza finally bestirred himself and went down to meet them. The leader effusively shook hands with him.

"Good morning, Señor Ceferino. Here I am back again, you see, with some hungry companions. Have you anything to give us to eat? Have you got my saddle for me? And the cigars?"

"That is as it may be," replied the host equivocally, as he led the way up into the house. "Please enter, gentlemen. This is my wife, and this is my sister-in-law."

The men removed their "jipi-japa" hats and bowed gallantly.

"These ladies are old friends," the leader declared, "and the sight of their beautiful faces is enough in itself to feed a man for a month."

The girl laughed in a gratified manner.

"Pst! Señor Capitán, you are a flatterer! But, there! who ever trusted the word of a man, especially in these days?"

"Ah, cruel one, do you not think I find it a thousand years since I met you last?"

While this persiflage was going forward the elder woman was busy placing some food—bread, cooked meat, fruits and wine—upon the table, while from a rear chamber, carefully locked, the host was producing several treasures. A saddle was brought out and tried upon one of the horses tied beneath the ceiba tree.

"This I bought from a sergeant, a good friend of mine, together with the cigars, which I get at the risk of my life, but 'punto en boca!'—not a word to any one. Smuggling is dangerous business, Señor Capitán, for all concerned, and it is a big price that the sergeant mulcts me of every time. 'Viva dios!' who can trust anybody?"

"Bah!" retorted the captain. "I have money enough if that is all. Let us to our account and then to eat, for I perish of hunger."

The figures were soon added up, the captain tossed upon the table the extortionate sum demanded for the articles furnished, and then together the men sat down to the impromptu repast. A box of the contraband cigars was opened and passed around, the ladies not refusing to join in the smoke. Amid jest and repartee the time fled swiftly, until the captain pulled out his watch with an air of consternation.

"'Caramba' five o'clock, my children, and we were to have joined the general before nightfall. 'Alerta!' to horse, to horse!"

There was a general scramble, yet at the last the handsome captain lingered a moment beside the girl.

"One kiss, my Rosita—one kiss to tie me to you, so I shall be sure to return."

"Kisses are frail cords," retorted the girl saucily.

"One, only one," he pleaded.

"*Diablo de loco!*" she cried, nevertheless she yielded to his embrace. When he was in the saddle he turned once more and blew her a kiss from the tips of his fingers.

"When we have wrecked a railway train or two and burned a few plantations we will return, my angel," he declared gaily; and, spurring their horses, they galloped away and were lost behind the shrubbery.

As for Rosita, she began to think that this was not such a dull place to live in after all. She had much more reason to think so before that night was over. She and her sister slept in a small inner room, the master preferring the cool of the piazza. A little after midnight the women were awakened by a confused thudding of hoofs outside.

"What is that?" inquired the girl, starting up.

"Who knows?" grunted the other. "Soldiers are always passing or running away. Do not disturb me, *tonta*, but go to sleep." For answer Rosita rose and creeping to the side of the house peeped out through a crack between the boarding. There was a young moon, just setting, which threw a faint, elusive glamor over the world, and enabled her to see in the road outside a body of horsemen. They were preternaturally quiet, as they sat there in their saddles like so many dusky statues. One of them, presumably the leader, had ridden close to the house, and the master had shambled from his perch to meet him. Both figures were lost in the shadow of the great tree, and the words that passed between them were—strain as she would—quite inaudible to the girl.

"Hist! come hither, *Señor Ceferino*," the captain was saying. "So—so—quietly. Tell me, have you seen any *'Mambis'** about here lately?"

"God forbid, *Señor Capitán!*" protested the Cuban, with unwonted fervor. "Indeed, how could any come this way, with this open road and the troops always patrolling? Does not your excellency see?"

*Cuban term for insurgents.

The other uttered an exclamation of impatience and drew a little closer.

"See here, 'amigo mío,' your memory is very poor. I think living near these swamps must be unhealthy; perhaps this medicine will help you." Something clinked pleasantly as Señor Ceferino slipped his hand slyly into his pocket. "And now, look here, my friend, I am looking for a rascal of the name of Chispa, sometimes called 'el gallardo,' who, with his scurvy following, has been giving the stations much annoyance. I know they have passed this way—now, do you not recollect a little more about it, eh?"

There was another clinking sound not so pleasant as that of money. This came from the cocking of a revolver.

"Ahem," coughed the Cuban. "It is true some very pleasant gentlemen were here this afternoon, drinking coffee with us, but they seemed innocent persons. How could I suspect they were the rebels the Señor Capitán is looking for?"

"Ah, and which way did these innocent persons go?"

"They went down the road to the southward, perhaps into the big forest beyond the bend. But how do I know? They may have gone any other way."

Rosita, straining her eyes through the aperture, beheld the mass of cavalry move on and become lost in the shadows of the night. She turned for conversation to her sister, but that lady was in a slumber too profound to be disturbed. She would fain have gone out and questioned her brother-in-law, but there was something about him, languid as he seemed, which inspired fear. She was fain therefore to repress her curiosity, yet, after all, this was soon to be gratified.

Just at daylight the cavalrymen came galloping back. There was no attempt at silence now. They arrived amid much clattering of accoutrements and noisy ejaculations. One could see that in their midst rode four men, disarmed and bound to their horses. Señor Ceferino skulked a little out of sight of these men. He seemed to have no desire to see them.

"Halt!" commanded the captain. "While we arrange our business we will have a little 'refresco.' Señor Ceferino, be good enough to prepare some coffee—a good quantity, for we are very thirsty."

Rosita, creeping once more to her chink, became greatly excited.

"'Concha, Concha!' what does this mean? They have

those señores with them and they are tied. What are they going to do?"

"Hush!" growled her sister angrily. "Do not make such a noise; they will be murdering us all. Be silent."

Rosita dropped her voice to an agitated whisper, but continued her observations.

"They have taken them off their horses—they are leading them out. Come and look, Concha."

"Not I—I do not want to see——"

"See what?"

"Nothing. Stop talking and kneel down and pray, Rosita." But Rosita was too excited for orisons.

"That noble Don Juan! He has his hat off—he looks like an angel. They are leading them all like cattle. Ah, God! they are lashing them—they are lashing them to the tree! Don Juan is in the middle. They have bandaged the eyes of the others—what for, Concha?—but Don Juan will not let them bind his eyes. The soldiers are dismounting and forming in a line. Are they going to shoot? *Jesú Cristo!* are they going to shoot? They lift their muskets—they are going to shoot! 'Ay! Ay! Ay!'"

Concha sprang forward suddenly and clapped her hand over the girl's mouth just in time to check an incipient scream.

"It is a sin, it is a sin, it is a sin!" Rosita moaned iterantly, as she writhed upon the floor. But all sounds were lost in the sudden rattle of musketry outside—a fierce, ominous concussion, followed by a few moments of profound silence. Then the captain's clear, cold voice was heard.

"Serve the coffee, Señor Ceferino."

The Cuban brought out a tray, his hands trembling a little.

Two men, detailed for that purpose, untied the corpses from the tree, and, laying them upon the horses, bore them down the road to cast into a near-by swamp. As they returned, one of them—a sergeant by the chevrons on his arms—pushed near to where the Cuban was standing. He leaned carelessly forward, pretending to flick a fly from his horse's neck.

"I got my saddle back," he whispered. "I told the señor capitán that it had been stolen from me. And the cigars—well, the señores seized all the cigars themselves. But one must not expect too much in this world."

Farther over a young officer was holding another colloquy with the commanding officer.

"Why did you bring these men to shoot up here? Why did you not dispatch them in the forest where we surprised them?"

"Ah, my dear Romualdo, that ceremony was an object lesson. You observe our friend, Señor Ceferino? Well, that man is as astute an out-and-out rascal as exists. I might, with justice, have put him also to the ceiba tree; but he is useful—at times very useful. So he lives—for the present; but I think—for the present—he will tell fewer lies."

The coffee was drunk, the signal for departure was given, and, with jingle of spur and clatter of arms, away went the gallant conquerors. The master of the house came slowly back into the piazza and flung himself once more upon his chairs. Rosita's paralysis of terror was passing. A fury of indignation possessed her. She rose, and, half-dressed as she was, came out upon the piazza and faced her brother-in-law.

"Oh, you bold, bad man, you betrayed them! You gave them up to their enemies! It was you—you who had taken their money and whom they trusted."

The man returned her from under his half-closed lids an insolent stare.

"'Diantre!' who are you, talking about bold and bad? You had better return into your room and dress yourself and learn to govern your tongue."

"Deny it," she went on passionately; "deny it if you can. You sold them. You took their money and then you sold them. Deny it if you can."

He leered viciously, pursed out his lips, and shrugged his shoulders.

"That's as it may be," he said, relapsing into his former indolent manner. "A man lives as he can in these hard times—and money is money."

He took up his guitar again, frowned at one of the strings which had snapped, tuned the remainder and commenced to strum. Then his slow tenor floated out through the morning in a fresh "copla."

"Dentro de mi pecho tengo
Dos escaleras de vidrio,
Por una suben los males,
Por la otra baja el alivio."*

*"Within my breast I keep
Two stairways made of glass;
Up the one life's evils creep,
Down the other its comforts pass."

THE FLYING SQUADRON*

A Story of the Black Republic

BY E. & H. HERON



IT'S an awkward business, take it how you will," Allansford was saying. "I've no belief in black republics; on the other hand, if the States do annex, they'll annex another big factor to that unmentionable trouble, the nigger question." I had formulated a simple and decisive policy to be pursued by the United States anent Cuba, and Allansford had subsequently pointed out with all the delicacy of intimate friendship that cocksureness was the result of an unblessed ignorance.

"But you surely will own that things could not have been allowed to go as they have been doing in Cuba?" I replied.

"I'm free to own that. It sounds fair enough to hear a Spaniard say the States have no call to shove a hand into his particular fish-tub. But it's not the States as the States that are acting; it's the States in the character of the nearest civilized power doing police-work, the police-work you hear so much about in Europe with regard to Turkish affairs. Given the Cuban is six of one and the Spaniard half-a-dozen of the other, still it isn't in nature to stand by and watch crowds of women and children die of dirt, disease and famine because two sets of mottled scoundrels choose to carry on a lingering guerilla warfare. The neutrals suffer, but, on the whole, the other johnnies enjoy themselves."

"The States must get something for their trouble," I said. "No nation ever did anything without a 'quid pro quo'—nor ever will."

"There will be no difficulty about that; American police are accustomed to collect their own wages," returned Allansford.

*From the "Cornhill Magazine."

"I very much hope the States will see their way to annexation, however, because there is only one other way out of that coil, and I've no special desire to see the foundation of another republic on the ground-plan of Cuba's eastern neighbor."

Allansford's piazza is the best place in Yellowtown, for there it is always—for Yellowtown—cool. In England the hour would have been the hour of afternoon tea. In Yellowtown we had just arisen from a late siesta. Allansford was sitting on the threshold of the piazza, half on and half off the dark polished floor of the big darkened room. Outside the cliff fell six hundred feet to the waters of the Pacific, which inshore were pale and blue, but away beyond the thundering bar they heaved westwards in spreading patches of violet.

Allansford was amusing himself with a grotesque catapult, which may have been a weapon used by the aboriginal inhabitants of those parts; at any rate, it looked pre-historic. With this he fired at the turkey-buzzards perched on the many-colored roofs of the corrugated-iron sheds in which the niggers lived on the beach below. A nigger came out barefooted into the burning sand to see what was disturbing the scavengers, and catching sight of Allansford grinned and retired to his own galvanized oven again. It was Allansford's custom to tell the tally of the huts in which the yellow fever raged, evening by evening, just when the thick shoulder of the tropic night-cloud began to show itself above the horizon, and we smoked forlornly to be rid of mosquitoes, and argued to exhaustion for want of anything on earth to do.

"Now, I'll tell you what's the matter with Cuba," went on Allansford; "it's her position. She's not a beggar at the door, like Crete; she's more like a voice crying somewhere out in the night, and nobody's made it their business until now to get up and see what's the matter."

"We," I said largely, identifying myself for the moment with Europe, "would have given her guaranteed autonomy long ago."

Allansford laughed rather scornfully, I thought.

"Very likely, and made the usual bad job of it. Cuba has no Porfirio Diaz, not even a Juarez, or she would be free to-day. As it is, without a capable leader, Cuba would soon sink far below the level of the worst of the Central American republics."

"Below! Why below?"

"Because as soon as the war stopped the negro population would get the upper hand, and they'd start a sister republic to Hayti, with Haytian laws and a shiny black president. The whites in Cuba don't see that yet, nor that their one chance of salvation lies by way of annexation—preferably to Mexico."

The night drew on with a cooler breeze, and I rocked myself lazily, while the crickets, first one, then two, and then a dozen, set up their drowsy whirr.

"Those Haytians, now," I said in the dusk, "they're a bumptious crowd, I've heard."

"Why, yes; once a nigger finds his head loose, he develops a burlesque ambition. Hayti once constituted itself into an empire, but it fell to pieces from natural causes. The Republic has an immense public debt, more or less repudiated; the currency is chiefly paper, and the greater part of that is forged. The history of Haytian politics would make incredible reading. Now it is not very generally known, but it's a fact, that once upon a time the Haytian Republic saw fit to initiate a war against Russia, Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Norway and every other power, with the exception of England and the United States of America!

"There were no formalities observed, such as sending ultimatums or making declarations of war, and no shot was fired; consequently there were no reprisals. Indeed, it is doubtful whether Russia, Germany, France and the others ever knew of the peril which menaced them; they certainly did not do so until that peril had become a matter of merely historical interest. Norway, in the person of the Spaniard who happened to be acting as Norwegian consul at the time, may have had an inkling of it, because of the hostile intentions openly avowed during a whole afternoon against a Norwegian timber-ship that had come up from the Mexican Gulf. Also the war was to be a purely naval war, and was undertaken in much the same spirit that urges a young bull to battle by way of testing his new-gotten horns; the horns in the case of Hayti being represented by their recently acquired warship, the *Foudroyant*, then lying at anchor in the harbor of Port au Prince.

"The beginning of the trouble may be attributed to certain action taken by the British Government in Jamaica. They did several things which Hayti disapproved and disliked. So the Haytians said 'Stop!' but in her customary casual way England took no manner of notice, and went on as before. This

drove the republic to the consideration of definite measures. It immediately determined to become a naval power and cope with England on her own element. The prime mover in the matter was General Deloncle, a large negro in cotton-print trousers and a clerical hat. He was a general in the Republican army, and brimful of ambition. Also he was a logician and a Positivist.

"'England,' he said to the President, 'she great big power—owns one hundred ships and one thousand jacktar. She make us do what she want until we own one-hunder-anone ships and one-thousan-anone jacktar! Then——'

"In this he merely stated the Haytian theory that the smaller number should always on principle run away. So it was that the republic set about becoming a first-class naval power with the ultimate idea of twisting England's tail.

"Judged by the standard of some of the surrounding States, the prospect before them opened out into an encouraging and variegated vista of triumph. Venezuela at that time possessed, so they say, but three gunboats; one was without a boiler, another had no propeller, and the third not infrequently did duty—for a consideration—as lighter to British shipping.

"If the Haytians really meant business, there seemed no reason why they should not become the sea power of the Caribbean and cover themselves with glory of the most superior kind.

"Such was the notion which prompted them to purchase their first warship. A new tax was at once levied, and they raised a handsome sum, four-fifths of which went, as usual, to the State officials, and the remaining fifth was used to buy the nucleus of a navy. The *Foudroyant*, in the days before the President's wife rechristened her, had been a tramp in the Gulf trade, taking the *Progreso*, *Vera Cruz* and *Tampico* route. She was a wooden ship, single screw, of about 1,500 tons gross register, and a speed—on paper—of ten knots, and she had originally been the *Susan Wroxham*, out of Cardiff. The Haytian Government bought her through her *Vera Cruz* agents, painted her white with a pink and pea-green strake and a Neapolitan-ice funnel—they are color-lovers in the Black Republic—clapped a cross-spar upon her mizzen-mast, and after a little gold-work about her prow launched her as a first-class cruiser of the Republic of Hayti. She carried a crew of eighty, and the only white men aboard were the four engineers.

"The step to be taken next could not be hastily decided upon; meanwhile the *Foudroyant* was utilized for saluting purposes. She was commanded, like everything else in Hayti, by a general. She took part in one review and knocked several yards of wharf into the harbor by loading up her big gun with ball in mistake for blank cartridge, and, in fact, taken altogether, was a source of real pride and self-gratulation to the Government.

"You must understand that Hayti is, above all things, military. She is the military republic, by far the most unconditionally military republic in the world. All the State departments are presided over by full generals. If you go ashore at Port au Prince and walk up the main street, a heavy percentage of the people you meet will be generals. So it was in the nature of things that the navy should be commanded by a general. And it happened to be the same man, Deloncle, who had inaugurated the spirited policy in connection with England.

"For some months he rested on his laurels, and tasted to the full the delightful distinction which his novel status conferred upon him. But by degrees the fickle public tired of their toy. There were changes in the Ministry, and the brand-newness of the popular sentiment about the warship was wearing off, so that Deloncle found himself sinking back into his old position of one general among many, instead of the sole and much-admired general of the navy; in fact, the army began to regain its old ascendancy over the imagination of the people, the reason probably being that there was a sameness about the tactics of the *Foudroyant*; she never did anything but steam round the harbor and fire salutes, while the army held reviews into which a certain amount of novelty could be thrown in the way of manœuvres and uniforms—especially uniforms.

"It struck Deloncle that the departure of the *Foudroyant* on a cruise in neighboring waters might revive the fading enthusiasm, the start to be celebrated by playing of bands and firing of cannon, and his return made into a sort of triumphal entry, when his grateful country could do no less than give a banquet in his honor, backed by public illuminations.

"He carried this through with success, and it produced an excellent effect for the time being. The warship made a number of comfortable little trips all within sight of land—quite a prolonged cruise can be made in those crowded seas without losing the land. But on one occasion they adventurously al-

tered their usual procedure and steamed clear. They steamed on and on, taking up tedious horizons, for some three days, till they did not know where they were, and the navigating colonel began to be vaguely suspicious that they had sailed out into some new and limitless ocean. At length, to every one's relief, a cloud of land appeared in the offing, which presently evolved itself into a little sun-scorched town, sitting on a cushion of green inside the sand-rim. They put in alongside the wharf and asked what day of the month it was, and after some further diplomatic questioning they discovered the name of the country they had arrived at. It was a comfort to find it to be Jamaica.

"In the course of a week, their confidence being restored, they paid a pilot to take them home again. After that they were regarded as local Nansens, and fêted accordingly. Next, however, some ill-advised person pointed out that fruit-boats ply almost daily between Hayti and Jamaica; but then a fruit-boat isn't a warship, and the irrelevancy of the criticism was obvious.

"Yet the effect of even this daring venture wore away, while the supremacy of the seas remained still a dream, and England went on making herself as obnoxious as ever. To add to this, Deloncle heard some very disquieting rumors. General Brutus Squadro, who happened to be his own specific rival, had gone one better in the bid for popularity. He had undertaken to add to the defenses of the island, and owing, as he put it, 'to the criminal indifference—or it might be incapacity—of the Ministry of Marine,' his chief design was to lay submarine mines in the harbor of Port au Prince, and so secure the capital from the dangers of foreign invasion.

"Deloncle saw at once that this was a bad business, for he knew that if ever he chanced to get into General Squadro's way, nothing could be more simple than the accidental discharge of a submarine mine, and there would be an end of Deloncle and his battleship. At first he could hit upon no way of counteracting Squadro's plot. Day by day Brutus grew in favor with the populace, who loved him for the plans he was making, fac-similes of which he caused to be published in colors, so that the people might know what he was doing and appreciate his patriotic labors.

"One evening Deloncle met Squadro in the harbor extension works.

"'I give you a good evening, General,'" said Deloncle.

"'I give you a most good evening, General,'" returned Squadro with even more dignity. 'When the mines are finished, we shall sleep safe at Port au Prince.'

"'But there is no war,'" said Deloncle sarcastically.

"'There may be next week or next month,'" explained Squadro.

"They looked each other up and down, and Deloncle, who was six feet two, felt the courage swell in his heart. Squadro had given him just the hint he needed.

"That night he sent off an invitation to the President, asking him to dine on board the navy on the following evening. After the dinner was over, he took the President away into the after-cabin, and put in an urgent demand for active service.

"'We hab navy,' he said indignantly, 'and she stay-at-'ome! What de use of stay-at-'ome navy?'

"The Haytians talk French of a sort, you know, and run their words into one another as negro races seem apt to do whatever tongue they adopt. I'm giving you a free translation.

"The President admitted that it was unfitting for a go-ahead state like theirs, which possessed so good a navy, to keep it chained up.

"'England—she dam proud! We teach her a lesson!' went on Deloncle. But the President shied at the idea of fighting England, and reminded Deloncle of the Bulldog.

"Some time previously an English man-of-war had visited Hayti about an indemnity, and left a considerable impression behind.

"'Oah, yes; I remember de British Bulldog and de jacktars wid de hairy breasts. Oah, yes, I remember, and de debbil of a captain! De little man who get eberyting he want! But we will not yet attack de mercantile of England or de States.'

"Upon this the President asked what General Deloncle wished him to do.

"'We will make war on all de oder nations, sah!' Deloncle answered without any hesitation.

"He knew exactly what he wanted. It was a comprehensive scheme, and the possible fame touched the vanity of the President and made him warm to the idea, though some lingering doubt, induced by the recollection of the Bulldog, that war is a game at which more than one can play, still troubled him. But Deloncle was prepared to overwhelm all objections.

" 'Dis ship is de Flying-Squadron of de Republic of Hayti! You gib me sealed orders,' he answered confidently. 'It is always sealed orders in de navies. I fulfill dem, and afterwards I return!'

"The President being yet inclined to demur, Deloncle went into details.

" 'You write, "Destroy dis," or "Sink dat," and it is done! We are ready to fight anyt'ing in dis fine big steamer! Dis is de way. We sight de enemy, we fire across her bows—she lay to, haul down her flag, and I go aboard! Den we bring back prizes, and we will add dem to our navy list. Come-on-deck, sah!'

"The President was then given a further insight into Deloncle's designs; but he had not much to gain personally by the affair, and his office to lose if it turned out badly, therefore he suggested that he should take the opinion of the Ministry before decided action.

" 'Oah, but most assuredly it is a t'ing for the sum-total of the Ministers to consult upon,' agreed the other, who had no notion of hiding his light under a bushel. 'But dat can be done ver'-soon. And den de world will hear of de Flying-Squadron of General Deloncle!'

"For many days Deloncle paraded the streets of Port au Prince, carrying the air of a man overloaded with an important mission. The Haytians, like all other niggers, are as full of curiosity as monkeys, and his movements were watched with immense interest. And when the proposal was laid before the Ministry in all its splendor, with the catchwords of 'Flying-Squadron' and 'sealed-orders' to inflame the national vain-gloriousness with the illusion of dabbling in affairs usually considered to be within the prerogative of the great powers only, it was unanimously conceded that the general of the navy had earned his keep. The President's speech was set forth in placards on the following day. His views on the reasons for armament were natural, because he was an undiluted savage. A savage raises a fighting power for the purpose of making war, a civilized people in order to maintain peace. He alluded to the example of big, fat, commercial Eug'land, which he compared to a hive of bees, making the honey, which is gold. Her warships, her cruisers and her gunboats were hornets sent forth to prevent other people's honey-making. The present expedition and the little war he advocated against Russia,

Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Norway and other second-rate nations was, so to speak, the thin end of the wedge. Hayti would increase and prosper, and by and by there would be a colored England in the Caribbean! As he ended, the black men around him, drunk with dreams of plunder and unlimited wealth, applauded to the echo.

"In the meanwhile Deloncle sat in his cabin on board the *Foudroyant* and awaited the coming of the sealed orders, playing European card games to pass the time with the major of the watch.

"When the orders actually came it was necessary to send for the chief engineer, because he could read. He was a thinnish hard-set man, hailing from Westward Ho, and he had no respect at all for his employers. When he came aft the 'sealed orders' were no longer sealed, but lying open on the table under the awning on the after-deck. The chief picked them up and began to read with wonder breaking out upon his face. Presently he said:

" 'So it's to be war—sanguinary war all round, and we're to do the fighting.'

"Deloncle signified that he was exactly right.

" 'But this document should not have been opened until we were out of sight of land,' said the chief. 'That's said expressly.'

" 'Yes; but de enemy has already come,' explained Deloncle, indicating a small steamer lying in the roads.

"She was flying the Norwegian flag and her pilot flag, but orders had been issued that no pilot was to go out to her, and her skipper was afraid to bring her in himself, not being regular on that route.

" 'She is there!' said Deloncle. 'We will make our first battle in de sight ob all!'

"The chief asked if they were to start next morning, hoping, perhaps, that saner counsels might by that time prevail. But Deloncle had the war-fever badly.

" 'We must be out ob de harbor before morning,' he replied. 'De orders, dey say, "Sail-at-once." You will remember dat dis is de Flying-Squadron ob Hayti! We must be ready to bombard de enemy at dawn!'

"By the time the fourth engineer had his harbor watch set the chief returned to the alley-way cabin with the extraordinary news.

"'Are we going round the world and back like the Libertad of the Mexicans?' inquired the second engineer, grinning.

"'Bigger thing than that, my son,' said the chief—manners were easy on the Foudroyant. 'This condemned old tramp is the Flying Squadron of Hayti, and we're going to offer battle to most of the navies of the world! That's our lay. The sealed orders say, "Sinkez-vous! Arretez-vous everything you sight-o." It's rank suicide, that's what it is.'

"But the engine-room staff refused to be dispirited, and rejoiced as one man at the chance of the fun, more especially as they very well knew the Foudroyant was not fit to fight a Dutch bumboat! The second engineer offered some suggestion of this kind.

"'You're right,' said the chief, 'right as you can be. We've two obsolete nine-pounders and that big German blunderbuss on deck. A rowboat with a governess and a child in it could take us, yet here we are prancing out to destruction to please a charcoal-skinned six-foot idiot! It makes me sick!'

"'What are we likely to fall in with?' answered the second gleefully. 'West India Pacific boat coming back through the Yucatan Channel?'

"'Barred! She'd sail under the Union Jack. Oh, no, we've fixed our prize. She's that Norwegian timber-tramp that's been signaling for a pilot the whole afternoon.'

"By eleven o'clock the Foudroyant's engine-bell rang, and the single screw began to revolve slowly. The Flying Squadron had started on her mission of blood.

"Deloncle, standing on the bridge, felt himself an embryo Nelson. The waterways of the world lay before him, and the German-made gun aboard twinkled black and wet without its tarpaulin under the heavy dews, ready for action and loaded with everything available. A mile away the starboard light of the Norwegian glimmered green through the darkness. Silence lay on the black sea. Deloncle would have preferred daylight and acclamation, but he dwelt on the sensation the battle would cause in the morning among the onlookers ashore, and the welcome that would be given to him when he towed his shattered prize into the harbor, and was comforted.

"In the pride of his heart he had determined upon making the ship's officers fetch the Foudroyant out of port without the aid usually lent by the local pilots. For this cause the Flying Squadron performed many strange antics underneath the stars,

but the providence of the drunkard and the fool befriended her, for after an hour or so she screamed into the outer night with no worse damage than knocking her browsprit into splinters.

"Naturally she showed no lights. Deloncle understood that under similar circumstances line-of-battle ships never did show lights. War had already broken out at Hayti, for the Foudroyant was going to soil the dawn with gunpowder. Deloncle proposed to lie with banked fires near his prey, and commence hostilities with the first light.

"Now about a fortnight or so before this a Liverpool shipping firm had sent out a cargo-boat, called the Panama, to do commerce among the islands. Shortly after midnight, the second mate on the bridge of the Panama had picked up the Port au Prince lights, and the lookout had chanted the usual, 'All's well,' after the quartermaster had struck eight bells. Of course, the Panama hadn't the ghost of a notion that the Flying Squadron of Hayti was out on the war-trail, any more than the crowd on board the Foudroyant gave a thought to any incoming steamers they might get foul of owing to their strategical abandonment of lights. Under any circumstances, I understood, the Foudroyant always showed a fine disregard for the rule of the road. If she met a ship, she simply steered straight ahead till the other vessel got out of her way. This course was not altogether prompted by pride, but partly by necessity, for the Haytians are not good at nautical manœuvres.

"In the thick blackness of the night the warship slid through the water, but as she turned to make her westing the stem of the big cargo-boat caught her abaft the mainmast. The Foudroyant leaped, shuddered and ceased to move. Deloncle on the bridge saw the big gun break loose under the shock and charge back with a rattle followed by the crash of woodwork.

"Then a harsh voice roared in a choke of rage from the Panama asking who they were.

"The chief, knowing what had happened, got on deck as soon as he could. He found Deloncle calling on the Panama to surrender.

"On seeing the chief, he clasped him in his arms.

"'Oah, it is glorious! It is magnificent. We 'ave rammed her!' he yelled in ecstasy.

"The chief shook himself clear.

"'Somebody's rammed us, you hooting bradawl! Get out the boats, or we'll see more glory than we bargained for in two

shakes! The collision's wrecked my engines; the sea's coming in like a sluice!

"Then he addressed himself to the mate on the Panama, who rudely intimated that he, the chief, must be drunk, or he'd have his lights showing, till the chief asked him to keep his blackguarding till later, as the Foudroyant was settling down by the stern. Then a gruff order was given to lower away and save as many as possible.

"The Liverpool lifeboats had a busy ten minutes of it. Luckily the night was calm, and a fair proportion of the Foudroyant's crew were hauled aboard, when they heard a sound like a gulp in some monstrous throat. It was the Flying Squadron of Hayti taking her final flutter to the sea bottom.

"The next dawn, that was to have heralded in the era of conquest and world-wide dominion, broke over a peaceful sea and a group of wet and saddened negroes—the survivors of the wreck. It broke also upon a large black man in cotton-print trousers, but lacking the clerical hat, who was trying with the help of the chief engineer, to make the position clear to the impatient skipper of the Panama.

"'So you were the Haytian Flying Squadron, were you?' he said at last. 'Well, I'm sorry I tumbled on to you and spoilt the fun. But I'll have to dock the Panama if I can get her as far as Jamaica, and I expect my people will send you in the bill, Commodore. Shall I put you ashore?'

"Deloncle accepted the offer, and hastened to tell his own version of the incident to the Government, who decided to seize the Panama as soon as she was warped into port; but the skipper was wide awake and steamed away from Port au Prince without entering the harbor, though before the year was over the Liverpool owners made a heavy demand upon the Republic."

"How did the tale come to you? Did it happen while you were at Hayti?" I asked of Allansford.

"Long before that. It was the chief engineer who told the story to me. I found him a berth later on one of the Atlas boats. But as for the collision, you may call it chance or bad luck, but the fact remains that no known power will ever persuade the Haytians that the Panama was not acting under orders from the Cabinet of St. James, who, hearing of the ambitions entertained by the Republic, sent out the Liverpool boat to commit a dastardly outrage!"

TO HIM THAT HATH NOT*

BY ELSIE SUSAN NORDHOFF



BE, Abie, supper's ready!" Mrs. Hopkins stood in the kitchen doorway and looked over the fields in their fresh green, to the wooded hills beyond. A glimmering June twilight had settled upon the land and, from the clump of willows, bordering the pond, came the shrill piping of frogs. Mrs. Hopkins liked the view because it was "homey," and, cat-like, she clung to familiar sights and sounds. She was a tall, angular woman, not thin, but flat, as though she had attained her growth between two unyielding boards. Drawing in a long breath of the grassy air, she stooped to pat the ragged-eared terrier, Catch, at her feet, who, in response, wagged his hindquarters, and smiled a one-sided, foolish smile.

Mr. Hopkins, strolling up from the barn in his shirt sleeves, his whole face illuminated by an appreciative smile, stopped to watch them.

"I never seen the like of that dorg of yourn, 'Tilda," he said, with naive optimism. He had never found anything yet that he could not admire.

Mrs. Abe nodded. "Matty Stebbins brought the mail over, Abe," she said, rising. "There's one of them seed catalogues for you, an' I got a reel nice letter from pa."

"You doan't say?" he drawled. "What'd he say?"

Mr. Hopkins had wide-open gray eyes, a clean-shaven face, and a round chin, with a deep dimple in the centre. There was something about him, big and broad as he was, that made one regret that his handsome babyhood was a thing of the past.

"He says he'll be home soon; but come in to supper or things'll be spoiled."

Mr. Hopkins obediently followed his wife's advice, went into

*Written for Short Stories.

the washroom off the kitchen, and emerged, his face shining and his dark hair well "slicked" with soapy water, just as Mrs. Hopkins opened the oven door and drew out a pan of biscuit.

"You can go an' git that letter, Abe," she said over her shoulder, "while I dish these. It's on the dresser along with your paper. I'll take an' read it to you," she continued when they were both seated at the supper table, "so's you can eat your victuals while they're good an' hot." She unfolded the sheet of letter paper, and smoothed out the creases.

"Dear 'Tilda," it ran, "it's a right smart while since I rote you. I hope you and Abe is well, and the cows and chickens and old white Billy. I've took and sold the ranch, darter, and the money's safe in the bank to San Diego, so now I kin come home, as you and Abe has been after me to do this long while. Maybe there'll be enuff money left over after I git home for to buy another cow, or add a piece to the barn. Californy's a fine place. I make no doubt its a growing State, yet somehow I ain't noways sorry to quit. It ain't never seemed like home. Well, I must close, darter, I guess by now you must be having a spell of hot weather back East. I'll rite ag'in before I start. Yours Truly, FATHER."

"It's real nice to hear from him again," Mrs. Hopkins said, with a little sigh. Abe nodded, smiling, but his mouth was too full of biscuit and pickled peaches to allow him to reply. He was a genial young farmer, a year younger than his wife, who treated him with a half-melancholy tenderness. She was proud of his good looks, for she had never been pretty herself, and since the death of her baby, three years before, had grown even plainer. Her pale eyes, sunburnt brown hair, and complexion were different tones of the same shade, and her features seemed worn colorless and smooth by the monotony of life, as the lettering on a tombstone is worn by wind and rain. She was a silent woman to whom words were no relief, and even her husband was rarely conscious of her loneliness. But sometimes, during the long summer afternoons, when the men were at work in the farther field, and the humming of bees in the honeysuckle by the kitchen window accentuated the silence indoors, Mrs. Hopkins took refuge under the sheltering branches of a laurel, near the pond, and gave vent to her misery.

"Oh, myme, myme," she would moan, rocking to and fro

to ease the "lonely ache," or dabbing at a single tear, "if only I could a-had a dozen to mother, an' him—my only one—born dead."

Meanwhile Catch, the terrier, with the hopefulness of youth, burrowed at the pond's edge for the water rats he never caught, and found life one long holiday.

California is aptly called the "Golden State"—golden from early morn till set of sun, when at last the glare changes into starlit darkness.

One August day the sun, rising clear and bright, shone down on lifeless stretches of land, covered with chaparral, whose pungent, sticky odor filled the air. Here and there a patch of orange-colored flowers broke in upon the brown, and over the tops of the bushes, on the hillsides, the "copper thread" sprawled its vampire-like tendrils. A road wound over the crumpled land, diving into the hollows and climbing the ascents with monotonous regularity.

As the sun rose higher and the paler lights of early morning changed to the glare of California midday a spare old man turned from a side path into the main road leading to San Diego. He walked with uncertain, weary steps, and everything about him, from the brim of his gray felt hat to the bundle tied to his stick, had a tired droop. When he reached one of the white mile-stones that dot the highway, and add to the monotony of the landscape, he sat down and, taking off his hat, wiped the dust from his face. His soft, white hair fell about his forehead in uneven, scant locks; his face was thin, and burned to a colorless gray by the sun, and his faded blue eyes looked out upon the scene with patient resignation.

"Miles an' miles an' miles of it," he said, gazing at the view. "There ain't no seemin' end."

A flock of quail, startled by the sound of his voice, rose into the air, the whir-r-r of many wings breaking the stillness, and two or three brown lizards darted beneath the chaparral, leaving long trails behind them in the road. While the old man rested he caught the sound of wheels above the moan of the wind, which had risen to a dry gale.

"It's a waggin," he said, eagerly watching the cloud of dust advancing towards him. It dipped into an intervening hollow and emerged on the crest of the mesa, when the wind shifting for a moment two horses' heads became visible.

"A team!" he burst out, rising, "an' it's a-goin' tew fast fer a load. Maybe they'll give me a lift. Say!" he shouted, when the wagon was upon him, "say!"

"What yo' want?" asked a voice out of the rapidly settling dust, as the wagon slowed up; "an' who are yo'?"

"It's only jest me," the old fellow said, apologetically. "Might you be a-goin' intew San Diego?"

"No; I reckon I ain't," was the curt rejoinder. A desert wind does not make men neighborly. The woman on the back seat leaned forward. She evidently regretted her husband's abrupt answer.

"I'm sho'e I'm real sorry we ain't," she said in a soft Southern drawl, 'if yo' was wantin' to be toted in."

"No matter," the old man said, wearily.

"Do yo' live tha'?" she asked.

"No, ma'am; I'm jest goin' in tew ketch the Eastern train."

"Seems like yo' got a long, tiresome walk befo' you."

"It does seem that ways," he answered, glancing along the glaring roadway.

"Where's yo' home at?" the woman asked.

She had kindly brown eyes, a generous, smiling mouth, and an ample figure. It was as natural to see a baby in her arms as it seemed to the baby to be there. The little towhead, whose blue eyes looked white in contrast to its sunburnt skin, stared at the stranger with the fearless curiosity of a person serenely contented with his surroundings, and at peace with the world.

"Why, back East, ma'am," the old man answered, "where I was born an' raised. Home?" he repeated in bewilderment after a moment's pause, "home! Oh, Lord, I forgot; I can't go home, I can't go home, fer the bank tew San Diego's busted an' all my money clean gone, clean gone."

He covered his face with his arms and moaned. The man in the wagon, whose face was wrinkled into a hard knot, in the effort to shade his eyes, stared at him, while his wife tried to hush the baby who was crying in sympathy.

"Look a-ye'h," she said presently, touching him gently on the arm. "Why don't yo' git in an' come home with we'uns? Yo're sut'ahnly welcome to live with us s'long as ever yo' want to, an' yo' can send word to yo' folks where yo' stoppin' at. Yo' sho'ely better come."

But the old man shook his head.

"No," he said, as if roused from some disagreeable dream.

"Thank you kindly, ma'am, but since you ain't goin' intew town I'll say gubbye. Darter, she's expectin' me on that early train, an' she wouldn't know rightly what had become of me if I wan't on it."

"Gubbye," said the woman, looking back wistfully as the wagon rumbled away, and the baby, glad to be in motion again, broke into a contented coo. "It's right uncomfortable leavin' him that ways," she said, the first one to break the silence.

"Well, I reckon tha' ain't nothin' else to do," her husband answered. "I s'pose he's plum crazy with the bustin' of the bank, an' the losin' of his money. It's a kinder pity."

"Pity? Job, it's right down wicked of them banks to bust," his wife burst out, with unexpected vigor. "An' if I had a say, I decla' I'd tote all them bank presidents and sech trash out an' hang 'em to the nighest teligraph pole the day they closed the doo's. An' I reckon tha'd be fewer banks bust," she added, grimly.

Her husband turned and looked at her in surprise.

"Ain't yo' gittin' a little heated?" he asked, wonderingly. "Yo' sound s'if yo'd lost money in that tha' bank yo'self."

"I reckon I can sympathize with them as has, if I ain't," his wife answered, the tears coming into her eyes.

The sun rose higher and higher, crossed the meridian and began its western descent, while the solitary figure trudged on. At last, when the bald lines of midday had faded into the softer coloring of sunset, he sat down beside a bush, and opening his bundle, began his evening meal. The distant hills turned from arid brown to pale violet, and deep purple shadows crept into the canons. In the west the sun set in a golden haze, and the wind, blowing in from the sea, freshened over the land,

"Seems as if, when I look long enough at that haze," the old man said aloud, between his bites of thick bread and butter, "I could see the farm back East, jest like a picter. Fields an' fields of grass, all gurgly green, an' the pond, an' them willers, an' the crows a cawin'. Then 'Tilda a-standin' in the kitchen doorways watchin' Abe settin' out fer the station, with old white Billy between the shafts, jest like it use tew be, an' all the cows in the East meadow a-turnin' inquirin' looks as he drives by." He gave a long, contented sigh. "Well, I s'pose California's a-boomin' State, but I guess I'll be reel glad to git back East. I'm a-gittin' old, an' dyin's best done at home." At the sound of the last word a frightened look crept into his face.

"Home?" he said. "Seems as if I'd lost something; but it ain't that; no, it ain't that, but it's something. Oh, Lord, I know. I clean forgot. I can't never go home, fer the bank tew San Diego's busted, an' all my money gone, clean gone."

He buried his face in his arms and sat silent, while the shadowy twilight crept softly about him, and one by one the stars twinkled out in the blue-black sky above. Hundreds of little rabbits, their white tails showing quaintly in the dusk, stole out of the chaparral to hunt their supper. In the distance a coyote barked, and from every cañon came an answering cry, till the darkness vibrated with the lonely sound.

"Abe, come along in to supper."

Mrs. Abe stood in the barn doorway, a shawl wrapped around her head and shoulders, and peered into the fragrant gloom within. The gentle rustle of cattle feeding came out to her, and mingling with it her husband's shrill, cheerful whistle. He joined her presently, and together they started towards the band of yellow light streaming through the open kitchen door. One long sweep of red lingered in the west, but the cold October twilight hid the maples in their crimson and yellow jackets, and made the line of neighboring foothills only a darker shadow in the night.

"Abe, I don't feel quite right about pa, somehow," Mrs. Hopkins said, as they went towards the house. "I ain't heerd a word since June." She slipped her hand through her husband's arm. "You don't think anything could a-happined to pa, Abe?" she added, an anxious tone in her monotonous voice.

"Naow what could a-took an' happined to him, 'Tilda?" her husband drawled, cheerfully. It was against his nature to believe that disagreeable things could happen. "You are the greatest hand for worryin' I ever seen. You know your pa was never no hand fer writin', an' that he was a reel brisk old man fer his years, naow doan't you?"

"Yes," she answered, slowly, "but if anything should a-happined to him."

"Pshaw, 'Tilda," Abe expostulated, patting the hand on his arm with rough tenderness, as a deep throated baying of hounds broke into the stillness, and cut its way through the apple-crisp October air.

"Ugh!" his wife said, with a little shiver, "I wish them dreary dorgs was dead."



THE MAJOR'S TROUT*

By E. M. Mott



OUR fishing club at Arnley was very select. The rules were severe and stringently kept. I, being the secretary, enforced them officially. As a matter of fact, I was merely the Major's puppet. He ordered us all about, myself included; and we submitted very cheerfully, for he was a genial tyrant

and a first-class fisherman.

Arnley is an Arcadian little village in the heart of the West Riding. Gray tiers of limestone rock frown above the little brown Swarfe, that swirls through velvet pastures never scarred by a plough for three centuries back. It is a bonny little river that needs good tackle and good judgment, for the current is swift and the trout are sly; many a happy hour have I spent there, and many a dismal one. But these latter the fisherman very rightly forgets.

There was one person whom the Major indulged, I had almost said obeyed. This was his pet niece, Miss Christina

*From the "Badminton Magazine."

Royce—"Chris" to a privileged few. Like Punch's Miss Diana, she was "particular, you know, but jolly." At the time I write of, she was about sixteen, and had not even put her hair up. Ah, Chris! you wear Paris bonnets now; but I remember how delightful you looked in a red Tam-o'-Shanter stuck all over with trout-flies, for Chris was a fisherwoman of no mean skill and of boundless ardor.

If Chris was her uncle's idol, yet she knew he gave her but a divided devotion. Her rival in his allegiance was the big trout.

Every fishing club has a big trout. And he would be but a poor creature who did not maintain that his own particular big trout was superior to all others. Any one of us would have fought to the death for the honor of the Arnley big trout, down to little Tommy Royce, the Major's son. He was thirteen then, the youngest member of the A. F. C., and knew as much about fishing as the oldest. Otherwise he was an ordinary boy—at least I thought so until—but I anticipate.

The best bit of the club water was a stretch nearly a mile long not far from "The Lodge," the Major's house. It was crossed at one point by a stone bridge. At the corner of the bridge, in a pool snugly sheltered by a steep bank, and by the stonework of the nearest arch, the big trout had his lair.

He had chosen it with remarkable sagacity. To throw a fly or even a worm into the pool was nearly impossible; to drop in bait of any sort appeared to be useless. The pool was small, and the bank overhung it; just below was a shallow rippling run which gurgled under the archway; close to the wall the trout used to dart out into the ripple, and then shoot coyly back to his shelter under the bank. I can see the flicker of his tail now. There he stayed, getting bigger and bigger, till from being a hunted quarry he became almost sacred, a sort of fetish, the private property of the club in general, and naturally of the Major in particular.

The Major got to regard him with a sort of superstitious reverence, and wove a web of myths and legends about him. Of course, we had all nearly caught him; a rotten cast, an ill-dressed fly, a half-second's delay in "striking," had alone prevented each one of us from landing him. But nobody else ever got a look in when the Major was fairly started on the theme; and, indeed, he was spoken of as often as not as "the Major's trout."

Now Chris felt, I suppose, that the trout was a dangerous rival to her supremacy; or else it was merely the feminine ambition to achieve (by any means) what all men had failed to do. I offer these conjectures merely to try to explain—not excuse—her disgraceful conduct.

Several of us had been supping with the Major one Sunday evening. It was a beautiful July night, and we sat in deck chairs in the garden, and smoked and talked about fishing; we could not do much else but talk just then, for the water had been too low and bright to be useful. Chris was there, too, of course. I remember now that she was curiously quiet, and sat nursing her fox-terrier and saying very little.

The big trout came up in the talk. I think every one but the Major was a bit sick of the subject. "Avec son Etre Suprême il commençait à nous ennuyer"; but he had got some novice to listen to him, and talked on till we all got up to go. Then the novice left, protesting:

"I don't care, Major Royce. A good double Stewart, and a worm, and the water a bit dark, and he'd be caught!"

"Sir," said the Major majestically, "that trout will never be caught!"

Next morning I started for an early bathe in a shady pool about half a mile below the bridge. On my way, as I passed The Lodge gates, I saw Tommy a few yards ahead of me. Thinking he had very likely got up for a swim too, I gave a friendly shout; but Tommy, to my amaze, gave one hunted look behind and fled in the direction of the river. This struck me as queer, and I went on faster. A bit of sloping ground showed me Tommy still ahead and still running. I began to run, too. Then I fetched up suddenly. Below me was the bridge, and just below the bridge I espied a slim, barefooted figure—unmistakably Chris! Her serge skirt was tucked up to her knees, and in one hand she carried the Major's largest landing-net.

She waded in gingerly at first, making little wry faces at the sharp stones; then, getting bolder, she plunged and strode into the middle of the swirling current, which was up to her knees, and running strongly enough to give her some difficulty in keeping her feet. What could she be up to? She scrambled about among the boulders, with an odd appearance of stealthy caution, and then I saw her red Tam-o'-Shanter disappear under the bridge. This was too much for my curiosity. I fol-

lowed that scarlet cap as if it had been a Will-o'-the-wisp. Chris, intent on her mysterious pursuit, never heard me. I saw her crouching under the archway, and heard, in her girlish treble, "Now, Tommy, now! Chuck it in!"

There was a splash, a jerk of the net, a gleam of something shiny and scaly, and a despairing shriek from Chris! She had missed her footing on the slippery bottom.

"Twist the net!" I yelled, plunging to her rescue; and making a grab in the half-dark, I caught her and the net in a promiscuous embrace. Safe among the meshes hung the big trout—caught at last!

Ten seconds later we were all gasping on the bank. Chris was dripping wet, severely bruised and nearly weeping with excitement. I offered my handkerchief to bathe the bruises, and she tucked her pretty bare feet under her frock, blushing furiously. Well might she blush for her scandalous poaching! But who was I to rebuke her? Was I not "particeps criminis"?

"Miss Christina!" I said severely.

"Oh, don't!" said Chris hysterically. "Kill him, please! Oh, isn't he a beauty? And, oh! what will Uncle Robert say?"

"I know one thing he'll say," I rejoined grimly. "And I am bound, as the club secretary, to report all poachers. I ought to report me—I mean you."

"Both of us—all of us!" said Chris wildly. "No, not Tommy—I persuaded him into it; I promised him five shillings and my old rod!"

Bribery and corruption!

"Miss Christina," I said, "you've disgraced us all. I am a ruined man. I shall be kicked out of the club—I had better go and drown myself at once, perhaps. But, by Jove! what a splendid fish he is! How did you hit on such a dodge to get him?"

"I thought of it all of a sudden," said Chris, drying her eyes. "I saw he always went down that same little run when he was startled from up above—and the corner of the wall keeps you nicely out of sight, you know—and——"

"It was abominable—it was disgraceful—it was—magnificent!" I cried, flinging morality to the winds.

Magnificent, but not war! War? It was cold-blooded murder; and here we were in the murderer's usual dilemma—what to do with the body!

It seemed so much trouble wasted, and such an insult to our noble victim, to burn or bury him—like Eugene Aram; and we couldn't quite devour him raw on the spot.

At this moment—quite unexpectedly—Tommy spoke, and impressively.

"Give him to me," he said, "and you two run home. I'll manage it."

Tommy was the least guilty, consequently he was the coolest, I suppose. Chris and I, being desperate, decided to trust to his leadership.

From this point onwards, Tommy took the principal rôle—Chris and I had merely to be the tragic chorus.

"Run home and change," repeated Tommy, "and you come to breakfast at our house—you often do, you know." (As, indeed, I did.)

So Chris and I jogged off—a wet, disreputable couple—and in another hour or less I walked up to The Lodge and was hailed by the Major's jovial voice through the open French window.

"Come in, Vincent! Been down for a dip? Grand morning, isn't it?"

"Good morning, Mr. Vincent," said Chris demurely. She looked perfectly unconcerned—crime sits easily on women!

I ate I knew not what, and talked I knew not how. What had become of Tommy and the trout?

At this moment Tommy entered. And in his hand, to my horror, he carried a handkerchief which "more expressed than hid" the unmistakable shape of the big trout!

In utter silence Tommy walked straight up to the Major and laid the trout on the table before him.

The Major went perfectly white. He grasped the arms of his chair, and turned upon his son such a face of petrified rage that I felt as if Tommy would shrivel where he stood.

"If Dad had only sworn at me," he said afterwards, "I shouldn't have cared, but when he looked at me that way—oh lor!"

At last the Major said hoarsely, "What is this, sir?"

Tommy gulped. "It's the big trout!" he said.

"And how the devil did you get it?"

"I didn't get it!" said the truthful Tommy.

"Then who did? And what infernal tricks have you been up to?"

"This morning," said Tommy, "I was down by the river chucking pebbles——"

"Confound your pebbles!"

"Into the water," went on Tommy; "and I saw two ragged, dirty-looking beggars on the bank, just by the bridge—a big chap and a tow-headed little scamp with bare legs, not much bigger than me" (I stole a glance at Chris); "and they had the—the——" Tommy gulped convulsively again, and I felt cold all over. "They had that"—pointing to the corpse—"in a landing-net!"

The Major dropped his head and groaned. Then glaring at Tommy:

"What were they like? Did you know them? How did you get the fish? Confound you, sir! answer me," and he rose from his chair and took Tommy by the shoulders.

"I told 'em to give me the fish, and they didn't want to," said Tommy, raising candid eyes to the Major's face. "The little beggar had it, and I collared it; then they cut and run, and I came home."

"You young idiot," said the Major wrathfully, "why didn't you go after them?"

"I did run a bit," said Tommy.

"Couldn't catch them? I shan't believe in your sprinting powers now," snorted the Major. "Rascals! rascals!"

"Well, Major," I struck in, "it's a horrible business; but, at all events, we've got the trout, and they haven't. Tommy, what was the big chap like? I might know him; I know most of the poachers hereabouts."

"An ugly beggar," said Tommy, "dressed something like a gentleman."

"Some rascally keeper turned poacher," I said to the Major. Then I reverently lifted the big fish in both my hands. "I wonder what he weighs?" I said.

"By George!" said the Major. "Christina, my dear, go and get the scales!"

We calmed the Major down gradually. Chris did a good deal of that.

The trout lay in state that afternoon for all to admire. He really was a noble fish, in first-rate condition, and weighed three pounds eleven ounces precisely. The news of his capture and his rescue spread like wildfire, and the Major by the end of the day was boasting of Tommy's pluck.

But he didn't appreciate it as much as we did.

We had the trout for supper, and a princely dish he made. He ought to have risen and shamed us, like Southey's miraculous poultry—but he didn't, and the graceless Chris had two helpings.

"Tommy, you're an angel!" said Chris that night, and she gave him a hug which he bore with Spartan composure.

I said: "Tommy, you are a genius. Some day you will be Premier, no doubt. In the meanwhile, this may help you to remember an ugly beggar whom you got out of a scrape."

"It was all quite true," said Tommy seriously.

Chris married money. If she fishes now it is for the stately salmon. She is attended by a dignified gillie, and her exploits are published in the sporting column of the *Gentlewoman*.

But she will never forget that "crowded hour of glorious life" spent in the capture of the Major's big trout.

Tommy is a distinguished "web-bob" at Eton. He will go far, that young man.



GARDEZ LA REINE*

BY ALEXANDER, BARON ROBERTS



RAIN—rain from morning until evening; a gray-lead sky that seems to link one night to another. A damp wind puts the waving sea of trees in the park at Wiesbaden into motion; but the brilliant green of these trees is changed to a gloomy gray. The noisy murmur of the bubbling brook that rushes by under the shadows of the huge oaks at the foot of Sonnenberg street, mingles with the drizzling sound of the pattering raindrops in the garden of an elegant villa. The thickly falling drops soon fall swiftly, with a dull kind of thud, and the drenched trees are languidly shaking all their leaves.

It was a day in early June. In the large dining-room the light that had fought against the dark shadows of a sunless day until five o'clock, had at last given way to a gloomy twilight. Yet it was quite dark in the small room adjoining it, shaded by the foliage of a huge maple tree. Only now and then the darkness is illumined by a red glow of light, that throws fantastic shadows on the polished frames of the furniture and the pictures, and causes the brilliant red of a costly Chinese vase to glow in chameleon-like splendor. The weird green eyes that gleam forth from under a pair of elegant patent-leather boots, resting on a huge bearskin rug, form a fitting contrast to the shadows round about.

The red glow is caused by a burning cigar, and the face of the smoker is visible through the clouds of smoke. A man of about thirty, with strong, marked features, an aristocratic nose,

*Translated by Amalie K. Boguslawsky, from the German, for Short Stories.

slightly bent, and a black mustache, brushed up after the old Spanish fashion.

The smoker is listening intently, while his eyes seek to penetrate the gloom. The whispering of voices is heard in the next room—a hushed sound, monotonous, never-changing, like the gurgle and murmur of the rain. The very kind of day to move one's chair closer to that of some trusted friend, and to exchange confidences! It seemed to him that his dear mamma had never been so communicative before! Yet her confidante surely has a right to know her secrets, for she is none other than mamma's future daughter-in-law—if not to-day, perhaps to-morrow?

Perhaps the next ray of sunshine will bring about the consummation of his wishes! When his mother bade him come home, her object was to marry him to the daughter of her deceased friend, the Baroness Amerenberg, at whose deathbed this mutually desirable plan had probably been settled.

"Family affairs make my presence at home necessary," was what he told his chief, the Ambassador at St. Petersburg, when he asked for a leave of absence, and he felt an unmanly blush overspread his brown cheeks; but, after all, he had not seen his mamma for nearly a year! Yet this sudden longing for him at a time when her lonely home was made glad by the visit of Countess Julia seemed very strange indeed!

Dear, sweet mamma, your plan is too transparent! You are not versed in our tricks of diplomacy, and to think that he allows himself to be caught in the net without resistance. Ah, how impatiently he longs for the word, the look, the burning spark that will set fire to the two hearts that long for one another! He has been in Wiesbaden for four days—waiting, waiting.

The pattering raindrops are beating louder and louder on the leaf-sheltered roof beneath the window, so that Count Alexander can hardly hear a word. He is growing impatient, for he has not heard Julie's voice for the last fifteen minutes—the clear, melodious voice that he loves—the voice that he never forgot for a moment during all the gay months of his life in St. Petersburg.

He approaches the open portière with a light step—he wants to remain unobserved. He sees only a silhouette-like outline of her beautiful head in the gray light, but his vivid imagination shows him the exquisite lines of her bright face and the

intellectual, yet childlike expression of her eyes. She is listening attentively to Aunt Carla's story. It had been Julia's privilege since her childhood to call her mother's trusted friend by this familiar name.

Countess Vidor is seated in a rocker next to the young girl. The small face, framed by heavy coils of hair, still shows the same look of bold defiance that is conspicuous in the portrait that adorns the wall of the little cabinet. Silver threads are visible here and there in her luxuriant hair. What a magnificent study-head hers will be when that wealth of hair will have become snowy by the weight of years. She draws the soft shawl that envelops her slight form about her with a shuddering motion. The sight of the dreary, endless rain seems to cause her more discomfort than the atmosphere of the room.

"Enough, enough, mamma!" Some strange, indefinable feeling, almost like a qualm of conscience, seems to prevent the utterance of these words.

The story she is relating—the drama of the unhappy marriage of his parents—is sad indeed. Count Vidor was twenty years older than his wife when he married her. If she had really been the child that she appeared to be, this difference in their ages might never have led to unhappiness; but the charming young girl had attained an unusual stage of mental maturity. Her father, a prominent statesman, had given her a fine education. She was gifted and quick of perception, and her ready wit and sharp satire were feared in those circles where triviality ruled supreme.

Yet he insisted that the girl of twenty was still a child, and would ever remain one to him. He had been on the road to a successful military career when a quarrel with his general "broke his neck," to use the unpleasant military jargon, and he determined to withdraw from public life in order to lead an idyllic existence with his pretty young wife on his estates in Thuringia.

He soon found that his pet scheme—to train a wife whose ideas and principles would be but an echo of his own personality—would prove a failure. The bright little woman convinced him that her character was formed, and his unbending will was made to suffer from her resistance at every step. She was fully determined to defend her personal freedom, for she had sacrificed her heart only to gratify the wish of a dearly-

beloved father. Count Vidor was handsome and very yealthy, and she, the daughter of a poor, though prominent official, was advised not to miss this brilliant opportunity.

The marriage did not prove a happy one—the two determined characters clashed continually.

Count Vidor was a passionate chess-player, though he showed but little talent for this noble game. His friends considered him a player of mediocre ability, while it was his ambition to win the laurels of a matador. Many of his former partners refused to play with him again, because he seemed to regard each "checkmate" as a personal insult.

Fate had ordained that a game of chess should decide their destiny.

Only one thing had been neglected in the education of the young countess—she did not know how to play chess. With a merry laugh she vowed that she would soon learn the game, and she warned her husband to be on his guard, for she was fully determined to defeat him.

"Oho!" he exclaimed laughingly. How could she ever think of such a thing—defeat him after he had practiced the game for the past twenty-five years?

It gave him a great deal of satisfaction to find that, as a pupil, she showed some deference to his wishes. Yet her progress was remarkable, and after a short time he felt convinced that he was training a very dangerous partner. He suffered his first defeat only four weeks after she had practiced her first knight's leap. It was a surprise which they both took good-naturedly—she gloried in her victory, and he delighted in the novel sensation of having been defeated by her; but her eyes, glowing with triumph, seemed to vow that her next victory would not be due to his carelessness, but to her own superior ability.

When this next victory came, only three weeks after the first one, he made a desperate effort to ward it off. A vague presentiment told him that his defeat would mean a symbolic prediction for their married life in the future. It was all in vain, he had to yield.

His face all aglow he offered her his hand across the chess-board, saying magnanimously:

"Let me offer my congratulations! That is capital!"

Yet she saw a strangely vibrating spark in his excited eyes, almost like a quick flash of hatred.

To be defeated by his pupil—what disgrace! And, worst of all, by his wife, who persistently refused to acknowledge his superiority in other matters, the tried and conscious power of his years and experience!

There was a succession of embittered contests. It seemed that her own refractoriness steeled her mental powers and made her capable of extraordinary efforts. But the family physician soon found occasion to prohibit the exciting game.

They did not play again until half a year after the birth of their son. She won the greater number of games, just as she had done before. Still she did not enjoy her victories, and when he lost a game he raged furiously, as excitable chess-players are wont to do. At such a moment his brutality would often gain the ascendancy over his gentlemanly instincts.

One day, after she had lost a game, she said defiantly that she had exposed her own position in order that he might be the winner. The terrible scene that followed her words made such an impression on them both that they vowed never to venture on this dangerous field again.

Though they tried in this way to avoid quarrels, it was evident that a spirit of opposition guided all their actions. No; their wedded life was not a happy one! Count Alexander is listening to the tale with a sad heart. . . . Why does his mother insist upon acquainting this young and happy girl with such a distorted picture of marriage?

And the catastrophe! Why must she hear that, too?

Count Alexander leans back in his chair with a frown. He did not want to hear more. That old story ought to be a buried memory of the past, and yet he listened involuntarily—not a word escaped him.

"After some time we prepared for another game," the Countess Vidor continued. "We felt ashamed to think that we lacked the courage to meet again on the battlefield. After all, it was only a game, and we thought it childish to desist. One evening, shortly before Christmas, the chess-board was brought for us. It was just before tea, and Alex was in the room, looking at a picture-book. He would glance at the figures occasionally with a longing look, as though they might prove far more interesting than his book. Vidor won the first game. Still he was as excited as ever, and he seemed fully determined not to lose the next. I strained every nerve to defeat him. I would not give him an opportunity to show his as-

cendency over me. We sat facing each other like two embittered foes; and while my eyes wandered back and forth among the figures with a feverish restlessness, I thought of the many sad conflicts of my life—outside the chess-board.

"Suddenly he was called away. He left the chess-board unwillingly, and with an angry glance. 'It is your turn!' he called, as he stood at the door. I shall never forget the strangely suspicious glance with which he regarded the board. I remained seated for a moment to think about my next move. Just then I remembered that I had neglected to attend to some household matter, so I, too, arose and left the room.

"When my husband returned I was seated at the chess-board again. 'So you are playing!' he exclaimed. 'Gardez la reine!' I retorted. It was only after I had moved my knight that I noticed that his queen stood before the king in the line of bishops, and was lost in consequence. This move was a complete surprise to me. My 'gardez la reine' must have sounded triumphant indeed.

"He started. "'Gardez la reine'? What does that mean?" he asked in a choked voice, while his face was flushed with anger. Touching a pawn, he added hoarsely: 'This one was not here when I left the room.'

"I felt that I was trembling violently. 'You surely do not mean to say that I moved the figures during your absence?'

"He looked at me sharply, with a glance that burned like fire, then he touched the pawn again and repeated slowly: 'This one was not here—I am sure of it!'

"'Walter!' I cried wildly.

"He shrugged his shoulders and said in a mocking tone of voice: 'Perhaps the fellow was polite enough to make room for your "gardez"!' "

"He arose hastily and, moving his hand across the chess-board with a vehement motion, he scattered the figures about the room. 'I shall not play with you again!' he cried in a hoarse voice.

"I sat pale and speechless, while he stormed in a wild rage. Suddenly I noticed the little one, who was regarding us with a frightened look. It occurred to me at once that he might have moved the ominous pawn during our absence.

"'Alasha!' I cried, 'did you move the figures on this board?'

"The little fellow came running towards me with a loud cry, and hid his face on my shoulder.

"I begged him to confess whether he had done it. I promised that he would not be punished; but no, no! He shook his head persistently—no! no!

"The child of five was wise enough to know what was at stake. One cruel, heartless word followed another; our mutual hatred dropped its mask and the inevitable end came. The ridiculous little pawn served only as a pretense, and yet, if Alasha had confessed that it was he who moved the figure, all might have been different. But it could not have been he—I cannot imagine who the culprit was, yet if he denies it, he certainly did not do it!"

Then she added, with a deep sigh:

"You know that we separated soon after this occurrence, and that we have never met again since that time."

There was a deep silence. The raindrops came down pattering on the leafy roof, and not another sound was heard round about.

"Oh," Countess Julia ejaculated suddenly. The words that followed were spoken plainly, and in a loud voice, so that Count Vidor might hear them in the next room: "If he had done it he would surely have confessed, Aunt Carla!"

Her voice shook with indignation at the thought that any one should dare to accuse him of a falsehood, and her words echoed her implicit faith in the purity of his character—the conviction that he was for her the embodiment of all that is noble and good, and her secret love for him. True, he was only a young child at the time! No, no! her hero, even when he was a child, would never be guilty of such a miserable lie. . . .

Silence again, broken only by the sound of the falling raindrops, then the two women heard a suppressed groan and a moment later Count Alexander's sonorous voice called out:

"He was the culprit, after all!"

He stood before them, his eyes flashing with anger at the thought that some irrepressible foe had wrested his secret from him.

"It was I who moved that pawn. I denied it, although I knew what was at stake. I was a foolish little fellow, and my denial was at first prompted by obstinacy. Later on it was something else that sealed my lips—enough, I did it! I had to make the confession at last. Mamma, I am sure you will forgive me, but I know that you, Julie——"

He stopped abruptly and rushed from the room, followed by the excited and confused glances of the two women.

Next day a bright sun dispersed the gray clouds. Yet its rays did not bring forth the burning spark that was to unite the two loving hearts.

How ridiculous that a falsehood, told by a child twenty-four years ago, should wreck the happiness of two lives! Such a possibility would be termed "impossible" even in a novel. Yet it proved an important factor in this case, as such seeming trifles often do in life.

A dark, heavy cloud overshadowed the friendship that had united Julia and Alexander since their childhood. Countess Vidor saw what misery it caused them, and still she felt powerless to avert the consequences of this strange incident.

There had been explanations between mother and son. Aunt Carla had tried to convince Julia that it was unjust and little short of folly to blame the man of thirty for a childish fault. There was no need of asking for or granting forgiveness. It is true, he might have made the confession long ago, though each passing year undoubtedly made it harder for him to speak. After all, his confession could at no time have influenced the fate of their married life.

Neither Julia nor Alexander referred to the matter again, when a single candid word would have sufficed to disperse the cloud. If he had spoken this word he would have begun by making a passionate declaration of love. Then he would have told her why he made the confession after so many years of silence—because he loves her dearly, because he felt unworthy of her affection while there was even the slightest stain on his name, and because every endearing term would seem like a desecration to him.

He would have told her that his secret had been the cloud that darkened his childhood days. He remembered the incident so well. The pretty ivory figures had been a coveted toy for a long time, and when the opportunity came he could not resist the temptation to move one of the little men. When he saw the disastrous result of his childish indiscretion, he was so badly frightened that he could not speak. Kind words as well as threats proved unavailing—he persisted in saying "no." The child's secret grew to be a part of his very being. He witnessed the exciting scenes that embittered the lives of his parents; he saw them part forever, and he felt the mute

grief of his lovely mother. His childish imagination exaggerated the wrong he had done, and the thought that so much depended upon his willingness to disclose the whole truth gave him a sort of gloomy satisfaction. After all, his silence had been due to a feeling of hatred towards his father. He thought of the cruel words that had often wounded his poor mother, of her tears, her lonely life. Yes, he hated his father; and he imagined that a confession might bring him back, and for this reason alone he persisted in maintaining silence.

His precocious seriousness when a boy seemed to originate in the secret that weighed so heavily upon him. In his own family as well as at school Count Alexander was looked upon as a model of truthfulness. His comrades and his superiors were wont to praise his conscientiousness, and his chivalrous spirit in all matters, and these qualities first won the admiration of Countess Amerenberg, whose daughter soon began to love Alexander for the very traits of character that had won her mother's heart.

And to think that Julia's ideal should be shattered thus cruelly! Her artless young soul had believed in him implicitly, and he felt that it would be useless to vindicate his actions by idle words.

Days of sadness followed. All the sunshine had vanished from Julia's lovely face, and Countess Vidor felt convinced that she had seen traces of secret tears.

It seemed impossible! How could a childish trick, something that happened a quarter of a century ago, threaten to frustrate the fulfillment of her heart's desire? She felt that something must be done to bring about the union of the lovers before it would be too late, and she racked her brain to find some means to accomplish this end.

Count Alexander seemed restless and absent-minded, for every glance from Julia's sad eyes was like a silent reproach. He could not endure this any longer, and he determined to find some pretext to leave home. A trip to Berlin on some official business—that would end all.

On the evening before his intended departure the three were at dinner in the magnificent dining-hall, famed for its fine collection of antique ceramics. It was a tedious meal indeed. The ridiculous misunderstanding oppressed them as much as ever, and Countess Vidor was more absent-minded than the others. A peculiar smile would occasionally brighten the charming,

ivory-hued face, until her large, intelligent eyes shone brightly—some sudden determination had overcome her doubts and reasonings.

"My children," she began, while her smile was tinged with a subtle mixture of unhappiness and cunning, "there is something that is burdening my conscience."

The two others looked up in surprise, trying meanwhile to avoid each other's glances.

"Alasha, a few days ago you confessed that it was you who moved that pawn, but that is not true. It was I myself who did it." . . .

A deep blush overspread her dainty face as she went on.

"Such a confession is not easy to make, for I must own that I deceived your father. I could not endure the thought of allowing him to triumph over me. I know it was wrong, but you may be assured that I have suffered the penalty. I beg your pardon, Alasha, that I did not contradict you at once——"

"Why, mamma!"

Julia had turned very pale, while she stared at the old countess in speechless amazement. Perhaps the invincible egotism of love divined the purpose of this stratagem and bowed before it with a glad heart.

"I beg your pardon, mamma," cried Alexander, "that is not true. You are really delightful! What can possibly induce you to tell us such a fairy tale?"

He jumped up and grasped his mother's charming head affectionately.

"Of course, it was I," she laughed roguishly, full of happiness at the thought that her little trick would prove successful. "You may forgive him now, Julia. How foolish we three have been!"

"Say no more, mamma!" he cried, placing his hand on her lips with a laugh. "What do you mean? What an idea!"

"*'Gardez la reine,'* is what I mean. Do you not understand me, Alasha! Your queen is in danger!"

The mother arose and hurried towards the door.

"*'Gardez la reine! Gardez la reine!'*" she cried laughingly, while she closed the door behind her. In the next room she sank into a large armchair and covered her glowing face with her hands. And with a beating heart she listened to hear any sound that might come from the dining-hall.

There the lovers stood gazing at each other in confusion.

"Do you think, Julia, that mamma——" he stammered.

"Aunt is so odd—what can make her say such a thing?" came her hesitating answer.

"I think it would please her if we should pretend to—believe——"

"Oh!"

"Come, we will tell her so—she will be so happy. Come!"

He stretched forth his hands and their eyes met in one beaming, blissful glance.

"Oh, Julia—dearest Julia!"

"Alasha!"

The name came like a soft breath from her glowing lips, and his own quickly responded by sealing the bond; but mamma did not fail to hear the fleeting sound, and a look of overwhelming happiness overspread her features. She felt grateful to think that she had won this game after all.





AN ANNIVERSARY DAY*

BY ANNIE B. KIMBALL

MISS HULDAH had discovered the gap a few days before as she came home across lots from a neighbor's.

"Jabez," she had said decisively, "the wall at this corner of the north pasture is all falling down. It must be fixed at once. I put up some brush, but that won't keep that bell-wether in long if he happens to find it."

"I declare for't! Wall, I'll get up thar arter supper and see about it."

Jabez had answered slowly. He did everything slowly, much to Miss Huldah's dissatisfaction. Jabez had lived with the Stockwells ever since Miss Huldah could remember. As her father had valued him she could not bring herself to dismiss him, although his sluggishness tried her exceedingly. When Mr. Stockwell died Huldah, from her fitness of character, had naturally arisen to fill his place. All the boys but Caleb soon forsook the farm for the city, and the invalid mother had died a few years afterward.

Caleb was older than Huldah; but, although he had resisted the prevailing fever of emigration with the intention of managing the farm, his was but a nominal superintendency. Whenever the orders from Jabez's two directors diametrically opposed each other, he was shrewdly discriminating as to which it would be safer for him to follow.

*Written for Short Stories.

"Miss Huld's amazin' smart," he used to say, "but she's a leetle oncomfortable sometimes."

Jabez was nearing old age, but he was as active as he ever had been. He had not exhausted his latent energy in youth and was, therefore, able to keep up his habitual moderate pace all through life. His faithfulness was his only redeeming feature from Miss Huldah's point of view; but while he was still faithful his memory had begun to fail. Miss Huldah had already noticed it in matters of minor importance, but thinking he would understand the importance of the wall's being promptly repaired, she had comfortably dismissed the matter from her mind.

Miss Huldah was making blackberry jam that morning. In the middle of the forenoon she was startled by the rush of a neighbor's little boy into her kitchen.

"Oh, Miss Huld, yer sheep's all in the medder," he exclaimed. "I'll help yer drive 'em back."

"Tom, wait for me," called Miss Huldah imperiously as she lifted her preserving kettle from the fire. Nothing, however startling, could have betrayed Miss Huldah into letting anything burn. They went out at the back door and across the mowing to the meadow. Such running, doubling, turning and twisting as followed in the hot August sun! The bell-wether led them a weary chase, successfully evading them at every turn, while the scattering flock fled away with a frightened blare.

The sheep-pasture was a rocky hill-side. The brow, and other sides of the hill were covered with a growth of maples at whose edge a sugar-house stood. Two girls, carrying artist's materials, came out from beneath the maples and paused to look off at old Kearsarge looming up grandly to the south-east through the August haze. The skirmishing in the meadow attracted the attention of the smallest and darker of the two.

"Linda, what can those people be doing?" she asked.

"Miss Hulda Stockwell's sheep are in the meadow, and she must be trying to drive them in here," returned Linda Cate after a quick glance. "Let's go and help her."

Miss Hulda was warm and tired. She grew more indignant with Jabez at every fresh failure to drive the bell-wether through the bars. It was a relief when she heard a cheerful young voice call:

"We will help you, Miss Huldah."

It was a welcome sound to Tom also. The adventure had promised him only fun at first, but it could not be denied that Miss Hulda's temper was not improving as time passed away. With this recruit the sheep's active leader soon accepted the inevitable and ran through the bars, where the flock quickly followed. Miss Hulda put the bars up with a sigh of relief, and turned to see who were her helpers.

"Oh, it's Lindy Cate, is it," she asked in a satirical tone. "When did you come?"

"Only last night," replied Linda. "This is my friend from Boston, Miss Prescott, Miss Huldah."

"I hope I see you well," said Miss Huldah with a prim bow. "I didn't know as your folks were ever coming this way again, Lindy," she continued as she fanned herself with her sun-bonnet.

"Oh, yes," Linda replied with quiet dignity. "Papa has been so busy these last two years that we have been only to some beach where he could come out every night; but this summer he decided to take a vacation. We all enjoy the country again."

"Well," remarked Miss Huldah abruptly, "I must be getting home. I guess the men-folks won't get much for dinner this noon. I've spent most of my forenoon tramping after those sheep. Tom, I want you to stay here and watch that gap till Jabez comes."

"Yes, marm," reluctantly consented Tom. He wished to know what the sunny-haired young lady, with the exquisite tints in her face, was going to do up by the maples, but he dared not disoblige Miss Huldah.

"What a crochety old woman," said Grace Prescott, as she helped to collect Linda's scattered articles. "Now you won't have time to make your sketch before dinner."

"We will come out again this afternoon," replied Linda slowly. She was somewhat disappointed that Miss Huldah had not received their aid more kindly, but she would say nothing then.

Miss Huldah's command to Jabez to rebuild the wall before dinner was short and curt. He felt anxious all the time he was at work.

"Guess I'll get a piece of Miss Huldah's mind when I go in," thought he. "She's been givin' away pieces of her mind ever sence she was knee high, but she seems to have plenty to spare

yet, and no less of a mind of her own, nuther, so fur's I ken see."

At dinner time Miss Huldah's aspect was grim and forbidding. A pan of milk stood in the centre of the table, flanked by a large dish of hasty pudding. Bread, butter and pie completed the list of viands. The men ate hurriedly and in silence, expecting at any moment an outburst of Miss Huldah's suppressed wrath. She ate sparingly, but said nothing.

"Milk ain't any too hearty at any time," muttered Jabez regretfully as he returned to his work, "but this noon I was expecting a squall and eat less than I mint."

After her work was done Miss Huldah started out to inspect the wall, and took a pail with her, intending to pick a few berries afterward. She swung along with a masculine stride rather more fiercely than usual. Her short, scant skirts displayed large, heavy shoes. An ample, oval breastpin, under whose protecting glass were set several family locks of hair, fastened her fresh print dress at the throat. Her stiffly starched gingham apron rustled as she walked. She would have thought it inappropriate to go without an apron on a week-day. She had worn a frown ever since she had found that the unexpected aid of the morning had come from Linda Cate.

Miss Huldah went straight to the rebuilt section of wall and examined it critically. Jabez had done his work with thoroughness, and even she could find no fault with it. While crossing a corner of the north pasture to get to the blackberry lot, she noticed that the sugar-house door stood ajar, and climbed the hill to fasten it.

Miss Huldah had taken no rest that day, and the cool interior looked inviting. She was not one of those easy-going people who can throw themselves down upon stone or turf and rest leisurely, but there was an old chair in the sugar-house, and she decided to stop a moment. Here in the languid August air memories she had long kept at bay rushed upon her with overwhelming force.

Her reverie was so deep that she did not hear voices until they were close to her; then she recognized them as belonging to Linda Cate and her friend. The door had a tendency not to stay open and had closed, all but a crack. In her present state of mind Miss Huldah did not care to see any one, and therefore sat quietly, thinking the girls would soon pass on; but

Linda selected her site and prepared to make a sketch in water-colors of the mountain. Her friend threw herself upon the grass, but neglected to open the book she had brought. When Miss Huldah saw through the crack of the door that they intended to remain, she decided to go, but just then her name attracted her attention.

"Linda," said Grace suddenly, reminded by the buildings in sight, "do tell me something about that Miss Stockwell. She looks as if she might be a character."

"Does she?" returned Linda quietly. "Their family history is rather interesting." Then she told it in an entertaining way, which was natural to her.

Miss Huldah, in her retirement, had the unusual privilege, if privilege it could be called, of learning the exact opinion of her neighbors concerning herself and her family, their estimate of her treatment of her feeble mother, and of her conduct towards her infirm brother. Her wrath arose hot and fierce. Linda had spoken in guarded terms, but the mildest statement of the truth could not be pleasing to the object of it. That it came from the lips of Linda Cate made it doubly cutting. Miss Huldah's first impulse was to burst from her hiding-place and confront the girls, but she lingered, curious to hear what more might be said.

"I thought she was cool enough to you this morning when you took so much pains to help her. She spoke as if she owed you a spite."

Linda smiled quietly, then half closed her eyes and took a critical survey of her sketch.

"Perhaps Miss Huldah wouldn't have been so malevolent if I were not a Cate. She is usually cordial to people, in her way. But she once expected to marry papa, and does not feel any too kindly towards any of us, I suppose."

"Your father could never have been engaged to her!"

"It does seem strange, but when Miss Hulda was young she was handsome and witty. Indeed, her wit had a sting in it sometimes. Papa and she had lived on neighboring farms, and had been to school together for years. He always took her to the country frolics and in time they were engaged."

"How was it broken off?"

"That is the interesting part of the story. You know how good-natured papa is. I can imagine Miss Huldah thought

Sunday, 16th, Monday—yes, to-day is the 20th! Twenty-three years ago this very day!” That she should have heard that old tale to-day certainly seemed a mockery.

Huldah Stockwell had borne the loss of her lover with that proud fortitude which sustained her through all trials and emergencies. Perhaps she had not realized exactly how much handsome Henry Cate had been to her until it was rumored that he was addressing his attentions to pretty Lucy Follansbee. If he had returned with a sufficiently humble apology no doubt she would have pardoned him; but she would not acknowledge even to herself that she regretted that he had not done so. She sometimes felt a thrill of bitterness, which she would have scorned to call envy, when Henry Cate and his family drove by in their comfortable carriage in the summer time. She had never felt interested in the boys, but to Linda, of the same, fair Saxon type as her father, she had been strongly attracted. She would not permit herself to show it, however, lest it might be regarded as a concession.

On this anniversary day Miss Huldah was destined to wait for another two hours—this time for Henry Cate’s daughter to finish her sketch. When the girls were at last hidden by the maples on their homeward way she cautiously ventured forth. As she crossed the meadow brook she lingered on the little foot-bridge a moment. A gentian, nestling in the grass, attracted her attention, and she picked it carefully. There was another, faded and fragile, among her possessions, which Henry Cate’s hand brought her the morning he had asked her to take that memorable drive. As Miss Huldah wended her way homeward she felt strangely humbled and subdued.

When the men came in to supper that night a pleasant surprise awaited them. Usually after a milk dinner they got no more substantial a supper than common, but on the table that night new potatoes, corned beef, sweet corn and shelled beans steamed odorously. There was also in Miss Huldah’s mien an unaccustomed mildness.

“Guess somethin’s come over Miss Huldy,” soliloquized Jabez as he returned to the barn; “but I’m afeared it won’t last.”

After supper Miss Huldah did a most unwonted thing. She donned her Sunday clothes of a week-day. Her old-fashioned silk gown had seen many years of service, while her faded crape shawl had been brought from China in her mother’s

girlhood days. Her bonnet, with its straw-colored ribbons, had been worn several seasons. Miss Huldah did not believe in discarding a thing simply because it was out of fashion. She drew on her mitts hurriedly and caught up her feather fan as if she were afraid her resolution might fail her at the last moment.

A little later Henry Cate and his family, enjoying the cool evening air on their piazza after the sultry day, saw a woman coming along the road.

"Oh, mamma," said Linda, "I do believe it's Miss Hulda, all in her Sunday best. Where can she be going?"

They watched the rapidly approaching figure with interest. Interest changed to wonder when it turned at their gate and came up the path.

"Good evening," said their visitor cordially, "I heard you were all here, and thought I would run over a minute."

Henry Cate, a man upon whom an air of prosperity sat graciously, arose with courteous manner and offered her a chair. A slight restraint possessed them all at first, but soon they were chatting as easily as if they had been on the most friendly terms for the last twenty years. Miss Huldah's eyes often rested upon Linda, but she was especially affable to Grace. Little Henry Cate whispered to his mother, then came and stood by Miss Huldah's side.

"I'm coming over to bring you some of our Damsons tomorrow—mamma says I may," said he.

As she arose to go Miss Huldah said: "I want you all to come over and stay to supper some day next week. Can you come Wednesday?"

Mrs. Cate glanced inquiringly at her husband.

"Thank you, Huldah," he said. "Yes; we will all come Wednesday if that is convenient to Lucy. I am glad you called on us."

They all shook hands amicably with her as she took her leave.

"Linda, you are the peacemaker as usual," her father remarked as they went in.

"You will have a feast Wednesday, Grace," observed Linda. "Miss Huldah's cooking is noted far and near."

Grace seemed to be meditating deeply.

"Perhaps it was just as well that I didn't explore the interior of the sugar-house this morning, although it may be no one was there," she thought.

Miss Huldah walked home through the summer twilight, her heart filled with a warm glow she had not known for years. The crickets were chirping cheerfully, and the frogs piped in shrill but merry chorus. A sheep-bell's tinkle sounded faintly from the hill-side at intervals. The meadow was alive with glimpsing, gleaming lights as the fireflies betook themselves to flight. A few stars shone dimly overhead and now and then another glimmered into sight. All the earth was wrapped in peace and the evening was like a benediction.

"I guess that Prescott girl will find out that I can be something besides a 'virago,'" thought Miss Huldah as she put away her wraps. "I wasn't going to have them pitying me any longer, and"—she added this last aloud—"it does seem a little more like folks to be more neighborly."





THE EVERGLADE GHOST*

BY BENJ. HARRISON



S you enter the winding ways that lead into the Everglades of Florida, life and color and movement are bewildering. Birds are on the water and in the air, their voices confuse the ear like the whirr of machinery, and are as harsh. Their numbers weary the eye, and their colors are kaleidoscopic. Birds, little and big, with voices shrill and harsh and low, but never soft or sweet; with long legs for wading and short paddles for swimming; birds of every shape and hue and bill that wade or swim or fly to find homes in this strange Sargasso Sea of waving grass. And the flowers—they float in great rafts that look like meadows, except that they are greener and smoother than earth can show, and they gleam and shine with fairy forms that blaze like stars in the moonlight, and whirl in the slow eddies of the wind in the deep black pools. For every leaf there is a bloom, and festoons of them twist and twine around each other to gain a little life in the world, yet their beauty is for the eye alone—they are as devoid of fragrance as our forgotten hopes. But your dream is broken for a pair of soft black eyes are all too near the boat, and under them are set the gleaming teeth and lipless mouth that proves the alligator. The shining water clearly defines his knotted back, and you fire hastily. There is a splash and a struggle. He disappears, but comes again to the surface and writhes and strikes with his great oar of a tail, and

*Written for Short Stories.

bleeds till he drifts away and catches in a mass of vines while you feel that murder has suddenly entered a fairyland, and you are guilty. But the blood has attracted others, till they crowd around and snarl and grunt and pull for their friend's legacy till conscience ceases to torment you, and you wish that all alligators had but one head, and that was within range.

But within the depths there is solitude utter and complete. There are no insects even to relieve your loneliness and excite your wonder at the deformed shapes that the Seminole says are "born of the bad words that come from the lips of wicked men." There is only the green of the vegetation and glare of the brazen sky across which an eagle or a vulture sometimes goes with hurrying wing. As your sole landmark there stands a great cypress like a sentinel on duty, near which no Indian will pass, and under which no man who knows its history would sleep for the world. There are great scars on the trunk which were once elaborate carvings. No vines hide these with soft green or tender blossom, and even the winds moan as they pass. Other marks show that once a great slab was cut out and then fastened back with strong spikes, and the roots show blotches and scars that make you shudder.

Sitting at the white man's campfire, Tomalista Hotalgee, of the family of the Wind, which traces its history back to Mexico, and ruled the Creek confederacy through those great chiefs we know as Alexander McGillivray and Billy Weatherford, and a thousand others—told in hushed tones why the great tree bore such marks and was so shunned.

Omathla, the Tustenuggee of the Seminoles, was dead. He left two sons, but his widow was wise, and the tribe listened to her, though her son was chief. Soctomassee, the red man's god, spoke to her and she lived long till her head was like the cotton of the paleface and her hand shook with extreme age.

Then she called her sons and the chiefs about her in a voice that was sharp as the chirp of the kee-way-chick, and she told them that she must die. And they all promised that what she wished should be done. And she called for Nigger Jim, that was her slave, and told him what he must do. And he said it should be so. And she told her son the chief that when Jim had done her bidding he must be a free man and go away. And he promised it should be done.

Then the widow of the old chief died, and the women of the tribe unbound their hair and made fires about in the woods,

and sat around them and mourned. The men went not to the woods for game, nor to the rivers for fish, but all mourned save the little children.

Then Jim took his tools for boat-building and went to the great cypress that stands alone to overlook the land the pale-face took, and the land of the Seminole, and he cut off a great slab. He dug into the heart of the living tree as a warrior digs a canoe, and made a grave so deep in the tree that its leaves withered as in a dry summer, and it made sad groans in the wind. Then he came back and told the chief.

And the chief and his brother took their mother, according to her word—she that had been the wise, the daughter of many chiefs of a line beloved of Soctomassee, and all the tribe followed her to the cypress where she wished to rest at last. And they put her in the heart of the tree, on her feet, that she need not fall. And they put with her what she might need when she came to the home of Soctomassee, and they put back the slab and nailed it fast, and cut many messages on the bark that she might not forget she was the daughter of many chiefs. Then they killed, at the foot of the tree, the pony she had loved and her cow and a white dog. And all the tribe returned to the village and mourned no more, but feasted.

Now Nigger Jim was free, and the chief told him to go. But he did not go. And when the days went by as many as the fingers on both hands, the chief said Jim must go. And Jim said he would go if his sister went with him. And the chief said the woman must stay. Then Jim said he would stay, too, and he would take a woman from the chief's brother for his wife. This the chief told his brother, and they beat Jim with sticks. Then Locosomo, the bad spirit, entered into Jim and sat always in his heart.

Next day the chief and the men were in the woods, except the chief's brother. Then Nigger Jim walked away, but came back with a red rag tied around his leg, for he gave himself up to Locomoso and did not fight against the evil that came in with his breath, but did not go out. Then the woman that Jim said he would take spoke bitter words to him, and the chief's brother drove him away with a stick. Then Jim took a rifle and shot the chief's brother, and he killed five of the squaws, and the rest ran away and found the chief in the woods and told him.

Then one of the men came back and saw Jim sitting on a

log with his rifle in his lap, and he crawled up like a snake and shot Jim, and then shot him again, so that Jim died. And when the warrior saw that Jim was dead he gave the scalp-yell and all came in. And they buried the chief's brother and the women, and gave them cows and white dogs and horses that they might not be shamed when they appeared before Soctomasee and told the tale to her that had lately gone before, but whose name was now "holowaugus."

But they did not bury Jim, and the birds ate him, and the sun whitened his bones. Then Jim was angry, and would not stay dead, but walked, so that the chief moved his village. But Jim followed and walked about the town, and he was too strong for the medicine man of the chief, for he walked like a great bear, and the game fled away. Then the chief sent for the Big Medicine Man of the Family of the Wind, the Tsatse-ta-hatchee, and word was brought to the chief, and he did what the Medicine Man said, for they went back and piled up the bones of Jim and burned them and scattered the ashes on the swift waters of the Loxahatchee, so that Jim would have no strength to walk, but would pass away.

But the dead wife of the old chief in the heart of the big cypress would not have it so, and she was stronger than the Wise Man of the Wind, for she called Jim to her, and he sits under the big cypress of the Alpattiekee, but he is nothing but a sound that laughs and groans and yells when the wind and the rain wakes him, for he has no strength since his bones are fine like dust before his spirit grew in the new country.

And the old squaw looks over the land of the white man and the homes of her children, and she calls down to Jim in the night when the wind blows and Jim answers back. But no red man must hear the talk under that tree, for it is "holowaugus," and Locosomo is near when they pow-wow.





A MORTUARY FRIVOLITY*

BY GERTRUDE F. LYNCH



H, my, yes," assented Mrs. Otis in answer to her neighbor's laudatory exclamation. "She's a smart girl, but onsart'in—onsart'in as a June-bug!"

Mrs. Perkins, who had come in to borrow some cornmeal, nodded understandingly.

"What kin you expect, 'Liza?" Her tone was significant and her eyes, looking through the opened window, watched a girlish figure in a gown of unmistakable city cut and style, making its way across lots to some distant point of shade and seclusion.

"Think of her grandfather, old Squire Wright, jest as good

*Written for Short Stories. Illustrations by Florence England Nosworthy.

as gold, so I've heerd father say; but weathercocks wan't no-where for turnin'. Everything to every one that come along. It didn't make a mite of difference to him—pleasant and sociable-like, but no backbone. He jest couldn't seem to make up his mind about anything or anybody, an' ef he did he'd change it. Who knows what he might uv ben ef he hadn't had that onfortunate *pro-clivity*—President, mebbe."

"Well, I guess Presidents ain't too reliable ef all you read in the paper's true," answered Mrs. Otis, meaningly.

Farmer Otis had lost the village post-office by an erroneous choice of political views, and any casual reference to administrative power was sure to upset the phlegmatic repose of his faithful spouse.

"Well, I s'pose they air human," Mrs. Perkins hastily interposed. "But speakin' of the Wrights, I've known 'em from 'a to izzard,' and they're all alike—onsart'in, heady, shif'les—jest like *Do-rothea* thar."

She pronounced the first syllable like the first syllable used for the solfeggio of the scale, a habit of village accent to which Dorothea smilingly acquiesced.

"Wonder what possessed her to come this summer?" continued Mrs. Perkins, still following the slowly receding figure with curious eyes. It's the fust time any of the fam'ly's taken any notice of their ancestral home sence George went away to York an' married. That was the year my Ann had the chicken-pox.



"She jest took the notion. All of her folks had gone to some hifalutin' wat'rin' place, where there's balls an' parties every day and lots of beaux, jest the kind of place you'd think a girl

would hanker after ef her father kin afford it, an' they do say George Wright's made heaps of money spekilatin' in cow-pons. She showed me a newspaper the other day with a big pikter of her sister in it. With her hat on an' her dress cut 'way down,

indecent lookin', I thought; might jest as well have had it tuk with a towel over her shoulders. Her name was below it in big letters, 'Belle' of some place. I've forgotten the first place, but the end was 'Sooly-mare'; Dorothea said it was French, an' meant 'On the sea.'"

"Good-lookin'?" queried Mrs. Perkins.

"Good-lookin'? She had the silliest smirk on her face an' a cast in one eye. Not near so pretty as Dorothea, an' her nose turns up, but her figger's shapely. She seemed dreadful ashamed when I called her attention to her sister's cast, said it was the fault of the paper. They have pikters of some belle or other in those papers every week. I guess it don't mean much to be a belle at them wat'rin' places ef a cross-eyed girl, with a bony neck, kin be one."

"Perhaps," Mrs. Perkins aptly suggested, "they sent Dorothea up there to get her out of the way till the other one's married off. Must be pretty hard for a young sprig to be makin' comparisons between 'em."

"I shouldn't wonder. I was so surprised the day she came. Jest drove up in the stage with Jerry. Said she told him to drive her 'round 'till she seed a place she liked. Seemed a crazy freak then, but I ain't surprised a bit now. I told her I wan't prepared or nothin', but she jest laffed. Said she liked the way the sunflowers waved in the front yard, an' she guessed she could stand it. I told her she better'd go to Deacon Smithers, that they took city folks, but she said she saw some Boston school-ma'ams in the yard, an' she never could talk before Boston school-ma'ams. She's real persuasive for all she's so onsart'in, an' I'm glad I took her. She's an awful lot of trouble, but she's cheery, and pays her board reg'lar. I asked her why she didn't go with her ma and pa, but she said she was worn to ravellin's with people an' beaux; jest wanted to be quiet. Quiet? She flies from one thing to another all day long; never still a minit. Plays croquet all alone, and writes pomes, or walks up an' down laffin' at her thoughts on the porch here, an' talkin' serious to me thro' the winder."

They talked a little while longer of Dorothea's "doin's," then Mrs. Perkins asked:

"Be you a-goin' to the sociable Friday arternoon?"

"Of course, I be. Ain't I on the committee? I promised to get somebody to sing an' play. S'pose I'll have to ask Bet

Sykes, but she's played every time, and folks air gettin' a little mite tired."

"Wouldn't Dorothea do somethin'?"

"She never teched a melodeon—says she's afraid of 'em. She has the alfiredest queer thoughts; thinks they're like jack-in-the-boxes, an' somethin' will jump out at her. I guess that's her excuse, an' she says she can't sing a bit, only whistle, an' that ain't respectable—at least, not for a sociable."

"I am a little mite tired myself," Mrs. Perkins admitted, "of Bet's 'sa'm tunes, but I guess it's Hobson's choice."

Her stock of conversational pleasantries exhausted, Mrs. Perkins turned to go.

At the door she paused.

"There, I nearly forgot to tell you, an' that's one of the principal things I come over for. Did you know that 'Lonzo Comstock was very low?"

"You don't say! I knew'd he ben porely, but I didn't think 'twas so serious. It's awful, ain't it, to meet your God with sech a weight of sin on yer conscience?"

Forty years before Alonzo Comstock had committed certain indiscretions under the impulse of youthful feeling heightened by over-indulgence in hard cider and an after-life of strict adherence to propriety and moral rectitude had not effaced the memory from his contemporaries. Domestic and haying troubles, which had pursued him, were looked upon as direct effects of divine wrath. His name had become a warning to the rising generation, and a term of reproach to his own. He had been preached against, treated in turn with remonstrance, reserve and patronage. The New England conscience is tenacious of its creeds. He had been unanimously elected to the life tenure of the black sheep of the village, and resignation from that office was only gained through the gateway of the Beyond.

"Will yer go to the funeral?"

"Of course." Mrs. Perkins spoke decisively. "I ain't ben inside of the house for twenty-five years, an' I feel as ef Patience'll need a friendly presence near her in the tryin' time."

The village stage, lumbering along, stopped at the gate.

Jerry, with an air of importance, nodded to the two women, clambered down over the high wheel, and after a reasonable season of eclipse in the body of the vehicle, emerged with a package in his hand.

"It's for Miss Dorothea," he called out.

Mrs. Otis took it. "What do you s'pose it is?" and she looked questioningly from one to the other. "It can't be another package of My Yards. She's had two this week, an', besides, tain't the right shape."

Mrs. Perkins answered with the accents of one who has no patience with crass ignorance.

"A warmin' pan, of course. Can't yer tell by the looks?"

Mrs. Otis objected mildly. "My, Mrs. Perkins, what could Dorothea want of a warmin' pan? She's allers complainin' of the heat."

"Paint the kiver, I 'spose. Mis' Olds' niece, that was up there year afore las', got one out of the garret and painted a reel purty bunch of flowers. She hung it up in the parlor with a blue ribbon to match the stems. Mis' Olds sets a heap of store by it."

"Sort of useless, ain't it?" queried Mrs. Otis.

"Well, that's a matter of 'pinion, I s'pose. I told Mis' Olds that it took up an awful sight of room, but she said 'twan't entirely useless. She opened the kiver, an' there was her best crape vail inside, all folded up. She's the neatest woman. Said it was a might handier than havin' it in the chest in the garret."

Mrs. Otis looked worried. "I hope Dorothea won't give it to me. I never could abide warm-in' pans—give me a good, hot iron or a stone bottle. Ef she's got to give me somethin', when she goes away, I'd rather it would be paper flowers; an' they ketch the dust awfully."

"Perhaps she'll give you a fascinator."

"I hope not. I've had seven, an' the last one ain't worn out yet. My Cousin Mirandy sends me one every two years from N' York. I wonder why city folks always send fascinators. There ain't any style in a fascinator even with a bow onto it."

Meanwhile, the subject of their conversation wended her way straight as the crow flies to a glade in the woods, which bordered "the medder," over which she exercised squatter sovereignty. Standing on tiptoe, she drew from a fork in the tree a rolled-up hammock, loosened it, and hung it on a peg in the opposite tree, then swung herself into it with the graceful ease of habitude. A deep inhalation of satisfaction testified her ap-



preciation of the shelter and solitude of her leafy bower, with its velvet carpet underneath and cloud-flecked curtain above. A smile hovered about her mouth, a reminiscent homage to the mirth-inspiring conversation of her landlady and neighbor, to whom she was the conscious cause of daily speculation.

Now and again she would awaken from the half-world of drowsiness, where fact and fancy masquerade in each other's motley garb and change her position in order to avoid some



irritating fleck of light playing hide and seek through the leaves.

She made a charming picture against a background of nature's dyes and harmonious blends, with her unconsciousness of attitude, her expression of absolute well-being, her nicety of drapery artlessly disarranged.

The sun, reaching the zenith, with remorseless intrusion, disturbed her.

"It must be near dinner-time," and she sighed. "I must go

back—oh dear!” and so saying she turned to the other side and drowsed anew.

As Mrs. Otis had declared, she was “onsart’n”—a characteristic which was a potent charm to hopeless admirers, a characteristic which had disorganized a household who, with trunks packed and arrangements made for the season of which she was to be a central figure, had heard with dismay her determination to spend the summer months in the New England village, twelve miles from a railroad station, the parent soil of her ancestral tree.

Mrs. Otis was peeling apples for the tea-time “sass” on the back stoop, when a fresh young voice saluted her.

She looked up disapprovingly.

“You don’t expect to get anything to eat this time of day, do you, Dorothea?” wiping her hands and preparing to rise.

“Oh, Mrs. Otis, I’m so hungry, and I forgot all about the time.”

“Of course you did, philanderin’ ’round that wet medder. You ain’t ben to a meal of vittles punctual sence you come.”

Dorothea laughed, stretched herself in a broken-down easy chair, which stood near the back door, and commenced to peel deftly a half-disrobed apple while Mrs. Otis, her words contradictory to her acts and manner, gathered together a delicate repast of fruit and eggs for her refractory boarder. “When she says she’s hungry, I know she ain’t,” Mrs. Otis mentally asseverated. “She’s sure to have ben eatin’ ‘My Yards’ all the mornin’. It’s only when I ain’t got a thing in the house that she eats like all outdoors.”

“Do you know what day in the week it is?” a plaintive voice interrupted.

“Of course; it’s Monday. Ain’t it the duty of every Christian woman to know the day of the week?”

“Is it? Well, I must be a heathen. I never can remember the day I’m living. Now, if the sun would only rise different colors for different days, say blue for Monday, green for Tuesday, it would simplify matters so.”

Mrs. Otis stopped in her sally from cupboard to table.

“What outlandish ideas you do have, to be sure! I b’lieve your mind’s as onsart’in as your body.”

Dorothea laughed. “That’s what the family say.”

The word family recalled a forgotten duty.

"Land sakes! I near forgot. You upset me so philanderin' 'round at this outlandish hour. Your ma's sent you a warmin' pan."

"A warming pan, Mrs. Otis? I don't believe my mother knows a warming pan when she sees one."

"Well, Jerry brought it up from the store. Said it come las' night."

"Where is it?"

"In the front entry, near the blind door."

Peals of laughter were soon heard from the designated place,



and a moment after Dorothea appeared. She held the unwrapped article in her hand.

"A warming pan, Mrs. Otis? Why, it's my banjo!"

Again the bursts of laughter rang out and, between the uncontrollable spasms, ejaculations of merriment were interspersed.

"Oh, this is too much. You'll be the death of me! A warming pan! My mother sending me a warming pan—oh dear, oh dear!"

Mrs. Otis stiffened with outraged pride.

"How'd I know what 'twas? Ef that don't look like a hifalutin' warmin' pan, my name ain't Wealthy. All it needs is a kiver. What's it for?"

"Listen."

Dorothea sat on the stoop, placed the instrument in position and commenced to croon a negro melody, accompanying herself on the banjo.

The expression of injured dignity on Mrs. Otis' face relaxed in pleased surprise.

"Ef that ain't the sweetest thing! What'd you say 'twas?"

"A banjo."

"Oh!"

All that afternoon sounds from the banjo pervaded the house. Mrs. Otis would stop her work to listen, keeping time with her foot and head, to the plaintive melodies of negro ditties, penetrating the incongruous atmosphere of the New England farm.

When Dorothea made her usual belated appearance at the supper table, Mrs. Otis was genially hospitable, and after a liberal supply of hot tea biscuit and currant jam, this unusual expansiveness was explained.

"I want yer to do somethin' for me, Dorothea."

"Now, don't ask me to go and see Deacon Lee's bedridden wife, my nerves won't stand exciting. Is that gingerbread? I want a big piece."

Mrs. Otis cut a large slice and continued:

"I wan't goin' to ask you anything of the kind. Seems to me your turribly obstinate, Dorothea. I know that ain't enny use. Ain't I ben hectoring you all summer to go to places you ought to, an' you won't go? The neighbors think you're awful stuck up, an' I expec' I'll be blamed after you go."

"Well, what is it?" Dorothea spoke resignedly.

"I want yer to take your banjo over an' play at the sewing circle on Friday at Widder Thacher's. I'll be a sight obleeged to yer, for I've promised to get somebody, and they're all sick of Bet Sykes' 'sa'm tunes. Now, do give up traipsing arter weeds one arternoon and be a good girl. You know your grandpa was a pillar of the meetin' house, an' it ain't treatin' his memory right."

Dorothea couldn't resist the plaintive tone.

"All right, Mrs. Otis, I'll play a few selections if you'll let me run away as soon as I have finished. I'm not going to stay

and tell everybody how much money my father has, or whether I've a beau, or how much my dress was a yard, or if my sister looks like the picture you've showed everybody in the village."

Mrs. Otis looked conscious.

Mrs. Otis would have enjoyed the opportunity of exhibiting Dorothea in the light of a meek and lowly guest, amenable to interrogative pleasantries, but this privilege being denied, she accepted her crumb of comfort gladly.

About twenty-four hours after Mrs. Otis had extracted with Machiavellian finesse this musical promise from Dorothea, the latter spoke decisively on the subject.

"Now, Mrs. Otis, you've told me just one dozen times since last night that the Widow Thacher lives right opposite the late Mr. Alonzo Comstock, recently deceased; that I must go upstairs to the front room and take off my things; that I must be sure to play before the village choir and Bet Sykes get there, and that I must speak to everybody, no matter whether they speak to me or not. If you say one word more on the subject I shall have a fainting spell at the specified time and be unable to attend."

"But you're so onsart'in, Dorothea," pleaded Mrs. Otis, in extenuation.

"That makes no difference. Promise!" and Dorothea looked determined.

Mrs. Otis promised.

Dorothea was lying on a quilt under the apple tree, with a box of "My Yards" by her side and a "begun" book in her hand. She heard the side door open, and looking lazily around saw Mrs. Otis, with her best bombazine gown, which had been hanging on the line all the morning, walking slowly towards the gate, with a poise of body which in her meant a combination of Sunday clothes and portentous social duties. She looked about as if searching for some one, and then, disappointed, continued her progress, stopping to prop up an ailing sunflower and to kick a loose stone from the graveled path.

"Good gracious!" and Dorothea dropped the book into the candy and sat upright. "It's the sociable day, and I forgot all about it. I thought Mrs. Otis looked terribly important all the morning. She kept her word like a brick—never mentioned it—just talked all the time of 'Lonzo Comstock's 'de-

mise.' I do believe rather than break her word to me she'd let me forget all about it.

"I'll go just as I am. I look all right," and she gazed with satisfaction at her neat tailor-made suit and shirtwaist. "I'll brush my hair and get my banjo," and in a little while, with sailor hat stuck jauntily on her head, and banjo in her hand, she walked leisurely down the road in the direction of Widow Thatcher's.

She stopped occasionally, once to rescue a kitten caught in the interstices of a vine-covered wall; once to take off her low russet shoe and shake the dust from it; once to blow a dandelion ball and count the spectral petals left standing.

A few rusty carryalls that had done duty from time immemorial at domestic and religious functions were standing about the house. The lean horses, whose bony frameworks were startlingly distinct, unhampered, were enjoying a quiet nibble of sparse-growing grass on the bit of a lawn outside the gate. In the tiny barnyard, at the side, where a stagnant pool reflected the clear sky overhead, a few squawking ducks ostentatiously exhibited their soiled feathers.

Two men, on opposite sides of the wicket gate, smoked contemplatively.

"There comes old Squire Wright's granddaughter," one remarked, as Dorothea came in sight, swinging her banjo with energetic motion.

"Good-lookin' gal. What's she carryin'?"

"Somethin' to catch butterflies, I guess. Them city folks air great on bugs. Keep 'em in the parlor in wall pockets."

"You don't say! She must take arter her mother's folks. The Wrights wan't no fools."

Dorothea nodded to them blithely as she approached, and they returned her salute awkwardly.

At the door, which was partly opened, she was met by a solemn-visaged man, dressed with extreme neatness in a suit of shining black, which seemed to have belonged to some remote ancestor, and to have retained outlines of his shape, instead of adapting itself to that of its present owner.

Dorothea made mental witticisms on his consciousness of unaccustomed "biled shirt" and Sunday best. "Looks for all the world as if he'd committed a deadly sin, and I knew it and he knew I knew it."

He put out his hand, as if intending to grasp hers with cor-

dial greeting, and then withdrew it with a staccato movement as if some concealed string had been pulled.

"I'm Miss Wright," volunteered Dorothea, introducing herself airily.

A faint glimmer of animation lightened his set features, and in a shrill, high voice, which fitted him no better than his clothes, he said:

"Now, it's real good of you to come, Mrs. Wright. I'm sure the widder'll be greatly teched."

Dorothea dimpled at the awkward "Mrs.," and then, intercepting an expression of consternation and interrogation directed towards the banjo, explained:

"I promised Mrs. Otis to play a few selections." She lifted it to appease his reticent curiosity.

He fingered it timidly. "'Tain't a harp?"

"Oh, no; only a banjo."

"It's good of yer to do it. 'Tain't many'd care to. The widder'll be tickled to death arter it's all over."

Dorothea was amused at the last phrase, but realized that it referred to the widow's duties as hostess, and was not intended as a reflection on her musical ability.

She looked over his gaunt shoulder into the "settin'-room" beyond where, ranged in unbending rows, on haircloth chairs, stiff as the morals and backs of their originators, sat a number of "guests" in sombre clothes, redolent of camphor and other moth-destroying perfumes. A small stove occupied the centre of the room and its uplifted top disclosed a bunch of dried grasses, this usurpation of vase privileges furnishing an excuse for its retention during the summer months. The colors of the carpet, once gay, had now turned to the nondescript hues of old age, and the wall paper's sprawling pattern had faded to harmony with it. A few portraits of smirking or sad-eyed progenitors held intercourse with each other from the equality of stained wood frames, and on the mantelpiece a clock with pictured dial accentuated the passing minutes with loud metallic ticks.

Occasionally some one would lean forward, engage in a conversation carried on in sepulchral whispers with a neighbor, and then relapse into the primitive condition of rigid propriety. The shutters were drawn, but through the broken slats the afternoon sun, as if conscious of its intrusion, lighted the room with dim mellow rays.

Down the stairs, which led to the threshold of the sitting-room, and which were covered with a well-worn oilcloth of forgotten pattern, fastened with huge brass rods, now and then a man would stamp heavily, invariably looking towards the expanse of white ceiling and supporting a rigid woman, who, with hands folded tightly in front of her and a spotless handkerchief hanging therefrom in depressed folds, would stare blankly before her, blind to the attentions of her faithful spouse, with an expression of tremendous responsibility on her thin-featured face.

The seriousness with which her neighbors faced the amusements of life had impressed Dorothea before, never so much as now. "I'm glad I didn't promise to stay," she mentally ejaculated. "This effusive merry-making, I am afraid, would murder my beauty sleep. The sepulchral nature of this 'sociable' is positively weird," and aloud to the grim-visaged doorkeeper, who had returned to her side after greeting some new arrivals with saddened words of low-toned greetings and convulsive grips of horny hands, "Shall I go in now? They look as if they needed waking up a little."

"Wouldn't you like to go upstairs? It's a purty sight. Can't you smell the flowers?"

"Oh, it's flowers I smell. I'm glad they're upstairs. It's very close down here. No, I won't go up. I hate to climb stairs. I'll just run in and play. If you see Mrs. Otis around anywhere you tell her I couldn't wait to find her. I want to get back early."

He nodded seriously. Her refusal to go upstairs seemed to perplex him, and he ventured to follow her a step toward the sitting-room.

"You're sure you won't change your mind and go upstairs?"

"Oh, no." She shook her head, and stepped toward the sitting-room.

No one arose to greet her, and after waiting a moment in the frigid stillness, Dorothea spoke, her clear-toned voice enunciating the precise syllables.

"Good afternoon, all. I promised Mrs. Otis to play a few tunes, and, if you're ready, I'll begin."

Mrs. Perkins, who was sitting near the door, spoke aggressively:

"Mis' Otis didn't tell me a word about it. I don't see what's

the use of makin' mountains of secrets out of molehills of facts."

Dorothea turned. "Oh, good afternoon, Mrs. Perkins. I didn't see you. Did your Danny say if he was coming up to set the croquet this afternoon?"

Mrs. Perkins looked reproachful.

"Mis' Wright, other an' graver thoughts air occerpyin' my mind jest at present."

Dorothea's eyes danced at the rebuke. Leaning forward she screened her own face with that of Mrs. Perkins in the opened end of the banjo, and whispered gleefully:

"Cheer up! You're going to have lots of good things to eat, so Mrs. Otis says."

Mrs. Perkins ejaculated with surprise:

"You don't say? Well, I ain't surprised at anything now."

Dorothea commenced with a plaintive melody, originally written for the star performer of a vaudeville, which had received recognition by means of itinerant organs and whistling boys.

The plunk-plunk of decisive touches and the twang-twang of released strings, with carefully emphasized rag-time, produced a result of harmony, strange and pleasant to her auditors. Mrs. Beckitt, who sat directly opposite the performer, wiped her eyes.

Dorothea smiled inwardly at this tribute to her skill, associated in her mind with emotions of so divergent a character.

After a suitable pause, during which the stony silence contributed, Dorothea spoke again, displaying her two rows of ivory teeth in a confidential smile.

"Perhaps you'd like something a little livelier. I think you are taking this matter too seriously," and she nodded humorously at a newcomer, who returned her audacious salute with a gesture of profound reserve.

The plunk-plunk, twang-twang of the ebony and pearl handled banjo filled the room with a delicate sonorousness.

"They do take things so earnestly," she mentally noted, "I wonder if they ever get enthusiastic over anything?"

There was a rustle of soft dresses on the stairs, and a quartette of sheepish-looking young people, with a general air of being at swords' points with their surroundings, filed in.

There were no seats, and they stood about decorously.

Dorothea leaned forward to the young woman next her and whispered :

"Can you sing in rag-time?"

"Rag-time!" and the girl looked apprehensively at her dress, while the hot blood mounted to her forehead at being addressed so unceremoniously by a stranger and in words which bore no import to her unversed mind.

"Yes, rag-time, you know," and Dorothea emphasized a few phrases on the instrument.

The girl shook her head.

"I was afraid you couldn't," Dorothea confided reassuringly.



"Never mind, I'll sing one song and then you can do your turn."

There was a look of wondering expectancy on the faces of her silent auditors.

"I do believe," and she made another mental note, "that I could wake them up if I kept on, but it isn't worth while, with that glorious weather wasting itself out of doors."

She turned around so that she could face the door, and the crowd who were standing on the stairs and in the narrow entry, and commenced to sing a negro melody entitled, "Done Got a New Hidin' Place."

"What words air she sayin'?" whispered old Mrs. Pettingill to her neighbor.

"I can't make 'em out any better'n you. Some new-fangled city hymn-tune, I s'pose."

"Ain't her folks pious?"

"Oh, 'Piscopal pious, I presume."

Dorothea had sung but one stanza when moved by an irresistible subconsciousness of some untoward happening, her eyes wandered toward the stairway where they encountered the agonized countenance of Mrs. Otis, who stood there endeavoring by frantic, half-concealed efforts to enjoin silence on the careless songstress.

"There must be somebody ill upstairs," concluded Dorothea hastily, "I don't wonder, the air is simply stifling."

She brought the song to an untimely end, bowed pleasantly, with an expansive smile which seemed to include the whole room full of silent, disapproving, unenthusiastic auditors, and, swinging her banjo, left the crowded apartment.

Mrs. Otis met her, placed a persuasive touch on her sleeve and led her to the rear door and out into the tiny enclosure, where a profusion of unkempt flowers overran the garden.

"Is anybody ill, Mrs. Otis?" she asked feelingly, touched by this unusual display of emotion.

The only answer was a pathetic:

"Dorothea, how could you? How'll I ever face folks again? What'll they think? It seemed to me as ef 'twas a year before I could ketch your eye."

Dorothea looked at her blankly.

"Didn't they like it? They were as dumb as oysters, but then they're always that, so I didn't think it was caused by my playing. What was the matter with it? Do they think the banjo an instrument of the Evil One?"

"I ought to have spoken, I know," wailed Mrs. Otis, "but arter my promise I couldn't with a clear conscience, an' I did think you could remember things twenty-four hours."

"Remember things? What have I forgotten now?"

As Dorothea still failed to grasp her implied meaning, Mrs. Otis exclaimed:

"Why, Dorothea Wright, where do you s'pose this is? Where do you think you've ben playin' those awful sacreligious tunes?"

"Where?" answered Dorothea spiritedly; "why at the Widow Thatcher's—the sociable. What do you mean?"

"Dorothea, this ain't the sociable artemoon. This is old

'Lenzo Comstock's funeral. The corpse is at the head of the stairs in the front room, and those war the mourners you were playin' to."

Mrs. Otis had but one excuse to offer for Dorothea's untimely appearance:

"She's onsart'in—onsart'in as a June-bug."





COUSIN FLORA*

By EDWIN PUGH

SHE was not my cousin, but the daughter of my father's dearest friend. She was born in India, but the climate did not suit her, and my parents offered to rear her among us in our English home. She came—a tiny slip of seven years, inadequately clad in white muslin with a pink sash; and everybody said that she and I were made for one another. I did not then understand the meaning of this phrase, but she explained it to me in the garden.

"They mean that when we are grown up we shall get married," she said.

The prospect displeased me. "Oh!" I gasped.

"But we shan't," she added.

"How do you know?" I asked.

"I shall refuse you," she said.

"But if I don't ask you to marry me?"

"Oh, but you will!"

"I will not."

"It would be rude not to."

"Not after what you have told me."

"You should always give a lady a chance to alter her mind."

"Who told you that?" I asked, for her airs of superiority galled me.

"I found it out by myself."

"I don't believe you."

"Yes, you do," she said.

*From the "Pall Mall Magazine."

And when I thought it over I concluded that she was right.

She had an irritating trick of being always right. I can see now that it was my anxiety to prove her wrong which made us quarrel so often and so bitterly.

She stayed with us for eight years, and then her father returned to England and took her away from among us. She went to live with him on an island somewhere, and ten years passed before I saw her again.

I went to Harrow, and from thence to Oxford. My stay at the University was more in the nature of a sojourn than a career, and my father seemed disappointed. I entered the diplomatic service, and was sent abroad as attaché to Constantinople, and spent two years working in the Chancery there. It was very pleasant out there, and I was sorry to be recalled; but my father, who still persisted in taking an interest in me, thought I should do better in Parliament. So I packed my traps and returned home. I was surprised to find, on my arrival in London, that people thought me rather a distinguished person; but my nature is pre-eminently adaptable, and I soon learned to disclaim virtues that I did not possess with all the careless ease of a successful man.

One night I dined with Lady Forfar, a very old friend of our family. I took down a demure little person in a blue frock. Lady Forfar introduced us with an air of great impressment, but I was feeling rather bored at the time and the name escaped me. The soup was atrocious, and I thought I might as well amuse my partner. I was evolving a pleasantry when she remarked:

"How do you like England after your absence, Mr. Craven?"

"England is really not so bad," said I. "But I think I shall like it better when people stop fussing me up."

"I thought men liked to be fussed up," she said.

"Because they always maintain the reverse?"

She smiled. "I have my little theories about your sex, of course."

"There are many things one cannot help liking England for," said I, deciding to be conventionally sentimental since the occasion seemed rather to demand that sort of thing. "For instance, it is pleasant to be among one's friends again, and to see old faces."

"Especially when the old faces are young?"

I laughed, and said, "I suppose so." I wanted to say something better than that, but she was so very unexpected.

She regarded me meditatively, and remarked:

"You will be surprised to hear, Mr. Craven, that I know a great deal about you."

"Not at all," said I. "It is quite ten minutes since we were introduced."

There I scored.

She laughed. "You waste yourself," said she.

"I was always extravagant," said I.

"One has to be poor to be that," she rejoined.

"I am more naked than the poorest."

I thought she would appreciate the point, as I had left her an opening for retort; but she merely shrugged her shoulders with a studied affectation of impatience.

"You must not think that I am laying claim to any extraordinary powers of insight into character," she said. "I know myself too well to hope to know other people."

"I beg your pardon," I said, feeling vaguely discomfited. "I thought . . . your 'little theories,' you know."

"They are never applied to individuals. Men are too assorted for that. What I know of you I—I have been—I have been told by a very great friend of yours."

"I am reassured," I replied. "No friend of mine ever tells the truth about me. How could he and be my friend?"

"You are too clever for me," she murmured pathetically; and the confession pleased me.

"Have you traveled?" I asked.

"Very little," she answered.

I had her at a disadvantage. "I think all young people should travel," said I severely. "Every country is an illustration in the book of life." I said this very carefully, for I had said it before.

"It is not such a dull book even without illustrations," she replied.

"You cannot have gone far into it."

"I have gone some way."

"To the end of the preface, perhaps?"

"I have already arrived at some conclusions."

"You surprise me!"

"That does not surprise me," she retorted. Her insolence was delicious.

"Are men such easy prey?" I asked.

She laughed enigmatically. Laughter is a poor substitute for repartee.

"I see that, in spite of what you said just now, you do claim a knowledge of men," I said. "I should not be surprised to hear that you write novels. I hope you don't, for I never read them. But even if you do your claim is not established."

"It can hardly be established before it is preferred," she said.

It seemed discreet to ignore this speech.

"Novels seem to be sometimes written not necessarily for publication, but as guarantees of their author's innocence," said I, to cover my discomfiture. "I looked into one the other day and found nothing——"

"It is a common experience."

"Nothing bearing any resemblance to real life. Still, I suppose they have their uses."

"They certainly help to eke out polite conversation."

"So they do, now you mention it. I suppose that is because everybody takes an interest in novels." Here I remembered a former remark of mine and added quickly: "Not that I take any interest in them!"

"It is often difficult," said she.

At this juncture my other neighbor, little Mrs. Dace, addressed me.

"Mr. Craven," said she, "I shall never forgive you."

"As that implies that you will never forget me——"

"You have not once opened your mouth," she pouted.

"But I have," said I, "and the dinner is excellent."

She giggled. "Miss Flora Wakeham is a very old friend of yours, I believe?"

"We were children together. But why rake up Cousin Flora?"

"I thought that the next best thing to talking to her might be talking of her."

Then I realized who the demure young person was. I turned to her again. Mrs. Dace has never forgiven me.

"You are Cousin Flora," I said sternly. "What do you mean by it?"

But just then Lady Forfar rose. However, I had some more conversation with Flora in the drawing-room afterwards. We quarreled at once; and subsequent reflection proved to me that she had not lost her old irritating trick of being always

right. My state of mind was complicated by a feeling, which I could not shake off, that I had made an unmitigated fool of myself at the dinner-table. Lady Forfar asked me:

"How do you like her?"

"I cannot decide which of us is insufferable," said I. That was the worst of Flora; she made you give yourself away to other people.

"I have always said that you were made for one another," sighed Lady Forfar.

"You admit that?" I exclaimed.

"Oh, I shall go on saying it," she replied.

She is most inconsequent.

I saw much of Flora despite our efforts to keep apart. Our friends were so officious.

"Look here, Flora," said I, on one occasion, "this is absurd. Everywhere I go I meet you. I believe you do it on purpose."

"I don't," said she. "But why does it annoy you?"

"You know how we dislike one another!"

"We don't dislike one another."

"Don't we?"

"Certainly not."

"I feel sure you are wrong, and, of course, you are right," said I. "But I wish we could do something to prevent it."

"It is Lady Forfar's fault."

"If it were only Lady Forfar we might cope with hideous circumstance," said I. "But it is everybody. I never knew such a pack of idiots! They say we were made for one another, and, of course, they have to prove their words. They will never be satisfied until we are married. Even then. . . . It's a dismal outlook for them, anyway, thank heaven! I say, Flora, can't you take some fellow in hand and make him marry you? That would rather solve matters."

"Why don't you marry?" she cried.

"That's right!" said I. Drive me into uncongenial wedlock."

"Oh, please yourself," said she. "I merely suggested it for your benefit. I can keep my temper when we meet."

"By Jove! I have an idea," I cried. "We'll pretend to be engaged."

"I don't think I should like that," said Flora.

"You are so selfish."

"And, besides," said Flora, "what good would it do?"

"They would leave us alone, then."

"Yes; alone together."

"Is that usual?"

Flora nodded.

"Still," she said, "I don't think they would be quite so anxious about us. We should be spared a little of their officious friendship. It would be rather restful."

"We will try it," said I. "What shall we have to do?"

"You must buy me a ring," said she, "and tell everybody it is a great secret."

"It will soon be famous if not great," said I.

"Fame is greatness," said she.

"And what do you do?" I asked.

"I wear the ring and contradict nothing," said Flora.

"It seems to me that the law concerning engagements needs careful revision," I grumbled.

"And then you must send me flowers and boxes of sweets and stall-tickets and so on."

"Why, it would be cheaper to marry you!" I cried.

"Yes," she assented; "but that is impossible."

"I am a poor man," I groaned.

"Of course," she said, "you need give me nothing, really. But then, people would talk."

"Let them talk," said I. "I would not ruin myself to buy the silence of heaven!"

"It will not be exactly pleasant for me, though," said Flora, musing.

"My position will be horrible," said I.

We decided to try the experiment. I bought a ring and asked one or two men at the club to tell nobody that I was engaged to Flora Wakeham. The same evening my mother warmly congratulated me, and my father offered to pay my debts. I had forgotten this contingency, and I wired to Flora: "How about our parents?"

She heeded not my frantic message.

"Thomas," said my father (he gave me that name, so I suppose he has a right to use it), "Thomas, you have made me a happy man. There is no woman I could have preferred."

There were many women whom I preferred!

"This one wise act of yours atones for all your misdemeanors," said my father. He is on the bench and rarely descends from it. "Of course, there is no necessity for a long engagement."

"All engagements do not end in marriage," I reminded him. But he was not disturbed.

"This one will," he rejoined.

And I thrilled with superstitious dread.

"Flora," said I when we next met, "I wish I had not bought that ring."

"So do I," said she. "It is perfectly hideous."

"This affair will end in disaster," I remarked, remembering my father's words.

"Nonsense!" said she.

"Women can do many things, but argument is beyond them," I reflected aloud.

"If the worst comes to the worst, we can always quarrel," said Flora.

"We do," said I.

"I mean that we can always break off the engagement by saying that we have quarreled."

"Will that seem sufficient reason to those who know us?"

"It will be quite conclusive if we part."

"I am not sure that I should like to part from you altogether, Flora. After all, your dislike of me is rather tonic."

"Oh, I don't dislike you."

"I hate that affectation of tolerance," I cried. "It is so very insulting!"

"I wonder if this experiment is going to be a success," mused Flora.

"I expect not," said I gloomily.

"Perhaps I ought not to have let you enter upon it," said Flora.

"My dear girl," I replied, "it is perfectly ridiculous to try and take that tone with me. I am quite aware of my responsibility with regard to you. That is what troubles me."

"It seems a pity to let it trouble you," said Flora.

The Fates fight for Flora. Just as I was about to rise and crush her under a weight of masculine logic, some one came up and claimed her for the next dance. I had to go and amuse an adoring dowager. I would rather be insulted by Flora than adored by a dowager. I could see Flora as she danced. Her partner was some idiotic soldier man with the waist of a barmaid. But Flora has no discrimination, and I daresay she thought him quite as witty and handsome as I. It is quite impossible to combine good dancing with good talking, as I ex-

plained to her afterwards. "I never dance myself for that reason," said I.

"It seems an unnecessary act of self-denial," said she.

The engagement dragged on for a fortnight. Then, one evening, I asked Flora to release me.

"I shall do nothing of the kind," she said. "The arrangement suits me very well."

"It does not suit me," said I. "We are always together now. I get no respite."

"Very well," she said coldly, and began to take off my ring.

"Surely," said I, "you are not pretending to be offended?"

"No," said she. "I am offended."

"My dear Flora, you understood perfectly——"

"You evidently did not," said she, throwing down the ring.

"If I have said anything ruder than usual——"

"That would be impossible!"

"But, my dear Flora——"

"I am tired of this perpetual bickering," said she.

"It is quite as much your fault as mine."

"I suppose any man would say that, but it sounds rather undignified. I am disappointed in you, Tom."

She rarely used my Christian name.

"I am awfully sorry, Flora," I murmured.

"Oh, it is all right," she said dully.

"Do you really want me to take back the ring?"

"I think you had better."

"No, Flora; keep it. Even if the engagement is ended you might—— But you think it hideous. I forgot."

"I don't really think it hideous," said she. "That was said to tease you."

She took back the ring, gave me a kind "Good-night," and went to join her father.

I began to wish that I liked Flora.

I did not see her for a week. The weather was damp, and I felt greatly depressed. Then we met again.

I asked her: "Are we still engaged?"

"I really do not know," she answered.

"What do you wish?"

"I am quite indifferent about it."

"I have been thinking seriously on the matter," said I, "and I have come to the conclusion that an engagement is rather a solemn sort of thing, Flora."

She was amused. "Is it?" she cried.

"It is a sacred obligation," said I.

"It should be, perhaps."

"It is," said I firmly. "Not in our case, of course, because we are not really engaged."

"I see," said she.

"And I think," said I, "that we should not play at being engaged."

"Do you want to be released?"

"I don't know what I want. Of course, it would be absurd for us to marry."

"And therefore the only thing to do is to proclaim the mock engagement at an end."

"That seems precipitate," I objected.

"It is the only alternative."

"I think that is a very arbitrary rule about there being only two alternatives," said I.

"Is there such a rule?" she asked.

"That is one of your worst failings, Flora. You can never——"

"Oh, don't let us squabble again."

"No, no," said I. "Let us come to a decision. We have two alternatives—or more."

"Thank you!"

Really, Flora can be almost charming.

"We must select one and act upon it."

"Yes," said Flora.

"The question is, Which one?"

"Yes," said Flora, "that is the question."

It seemed difficult to proceed.

"There are so many things to be considered," I remarked at length.

"There are our parents."

"Yes; there they are," said I.

They came up at that moment, a beaming quartette, and our colloquy ended.

Flora continued to wear my ring. I saw her every day, but she said nothing concerning the termination of our engagement, and I felt that I should be lacking in good taste if I broached the subject. It was very agonizing. At last my father drove me to a determination to speak once more.

"Flora, my father says we must fix a date," I began.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that a crisis is imminent. Something decisive must certainly be done at once."

"Are you going to do it?"

"Am I going to do what?"

"The decisive thing."

"That depends on you."

"Do you want me to fix a date?"

"Of course not. Don't be so cold-blooded, Flora."

"You want your ring back?"

"I don't care a hang about the ring."

"Don't be so violent, Tom."

"This business is sapping my self-respect," I cried. "How can I help being violent?"

"I am not violent."

"That is why I am. You would be violent if I were not."

She smiled. "The ring," said she, "is valuable as an outward and visible sign. It is a delicate intimation to the world. Therefore it is foolish to say you do not care a hang about it. So long as I wear it we are engaged."

"Only in the eyes of the world," I interposed.

"Of course. And the moment I give it back to you our engagement is ended."

"My father will make an awful fuss," I groaned. "I shudder at the thought of what he will say."

He had settled my debts already.

"Then you are resolved on breaking off the engagement?"

"I suppose so."

I spoke listlessly. Flora handed me the ring.

"I think I will go back now," she said. "Of course, you will tell your father to-night?"

"Don't go away, Flora," said I. "I want to ask you something. How ought we to behave to one another now?"

"I think we ought to avoid one another as much as possible."

"But we are sure to meet pretty often."

"Yes."

"It will be very awkward."

"We must just nod coldly, you know."

"May we not quarrel?"

"Certainly not."

"But, Flora, you said——"

"Tom, this is idle. Good-bye."

"One word more, Flora."

"Yes?"

"You won't think me rude for saying this?"

She stared. "No," she faltered.

I cleared my throat. "Er—I suppose you will go and marry some one else now?" I asked her.

"I have promised not to think you rude," she observed.

"I don't think I shall like your husband, Flora," I remarked discontentedly. "Your taste in men is so crude."

She bowed.

"I wonder if you will like my wife," I went on.

"I shall try to like her, Tom."

"Ah, that is always fatal."

I was silent awhile, though there were many thoughts in my breast clamoring for expression.

"I think we had better say good-bye," said Flora, and she held out her hand. Mechanically, I clasped it. And then she was gone, and I was left fumbling the ring.

I was very unhappy—unreasonably so. I went home resolved to tell my father everything. We were dining "en famille" that night. He would call me into the library after dinner as usual, and I would open my heart to him. That was my intention, but when the time came I could not carry it into effect; he was so cheerfully oblivious of approaching evil. We parted at his bedroom door, and I had not spoken. I took out the ring and looked at it.

"Poor Flora!" I murmured. "What a pity it is!"

And I went to bed, sighing.

Three days passed, and still I remained silent. My mind was in a state of chaos. I wondered what Flora was doing and how her people were taking it. It seemed odd that nothing had yet leaked out.

On the fourth day I was sitting brooding in the park, when suddenly I awoke to the fact that a footman was addressing me.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said he. "Miss Wakeham wishes to speak to you."

I looked up then, and saw that a barouche had stopped opposite to me. In it sat Flora, and I observed that she was very pale. She smiled at me, and I rose and went to her. We shook hands.

"Get in," said she. "I want to talk to you."

I felt somewhat uncomfortable as I obeyed her. The barouche drove on, and I sat looking down. I was conscious that her eyes were fixed upon me.

"Tom," she said sternly, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Flora," said I, "it is quite impossible to tell him." Then, in a moment of direct inspiration, I asked, "Have you told your people yet?"

"N—no," she faltered.

"Why haven't you?" I asked severely.

"You can hardly ask me that after behaving as you have done."

"But surely they missed the ring?" said I.

"Ye—yes."

I stared at her.

"I accounted for that," she said, blushing.

We lapsed into silence. I sighed.

"Flora," I burst forth, "the situation is desperate."

"It is intolerable," said she, fingering her gown.

"I have the ring with me, curiously enough," said I, producing it.

She looked at it. I looked at her. Suddenly she challenged my gaze. I began to laugh foolishly.

"I wish you would wear the ring again," said I.

"I cannot do that," she said.

"You can take it off when we part."

"It is so foolish."

"To please me, Flora."

"Very well, Tom."

I had never known her to be so meek. She slipped the ring on her finger, and it seemed to magnetize our gaze. She made a sudden movement to take it off.

"Why should you?" I whispered, restraining her.

Her lips moved, but she did not speak. The carriage drove on. Hyde Park was at its best that morning.

"I think I had better go back," Flora faltered presently.

"It is not always possible," said I.

"I mean—to Rutland Gate," said she.

SHORT CREEK DAVE'S CONVERSION*

BY ALFRED HENRY LEWIS (DAN QUIN)



HORT CREEK DAVE was a leading citizen of the little camp of Cinnabar. In fact, his friends would not scruple at the claim that Short Creek was a leading citizen of Arizona. So when the news came over from Tucson that Short Creek, who had been paying that metropolis a breezy visit, had in an inadvertent moment strolled within the confines of a gospel meeting then and there being waged, and suffered conversion, Cinnabar became a prey to some excitement.

"I told him," said Bill Tutt, who brought back the tidings, "not to go tamperin' 'round this yere meetin'. But he would have it. He jest kept pervading about the 'go-in' place, and looks like I can't get him away. Says I: 'Bill, you don't understand this yere game they're turnin' inside, so jest you keep out a whole lot; you'll be safer.' But warnin's warn't no good—not as much as throwin' water on a drowned rat."

"This yere Short Creek was allers speshul obstinate that a-way," said Old Scotty, the driver of the Tucson stage; "and he gets them moods frequent when he jest won't stay whar he is, nor go anywhar else. I don't wonder you don't do nuthin' with him."

"Well," said Rosewood Jim, otherwise James Rosewood, Esquire, "I reckon Short Creek knows his business. I ain't myself none astonished much by these yere news. I've knowed him to do mighty flighty things, sech as breakin' a good pair to draw to a three-flush, and it would seem like he's jest a-pur-sooin' of his usual system in this yere religious break. How-

*Reprinted by request.

ever, he'll be in Cinnabar to-morry, and then we'll know a mighty sight more about it, pendin' which, let's lick'er. Mr. Barkeep, please inquire out the nose paints for the band."

The people of Cinnabar there present saw no reason to pursue the discussion so pleasantly ended, and drew near the bar. The discussion took place in the Gold Mine saloon, so, as one observed on the issuance of Rosewood's invitation, "they were not far from centres." Rosewood himself was a suave cour-tier of fortune, who presided behind his own faro game, and who, being reputed to possess a straight deal-box, held high place in the Cinnabar breast.

The next day came, and Cinnabar began to suffer increased excitement. This feeling grew as the time for the coming of the Tucson stage approached. An outsider might not have detected this warmth. It found its evidences in the unusual activity of monte, highball, stud, and kindred devices, while faro, too, showed a boom spirit, and white chips, which were a commodity ordinarily disposed of at the rate of two bits per white chip, had, under the heightened pulse of the public, gone in some games to the dizzy pinnacle of twenty-five dollars a stack.

At last out on the gray and heated plain a cloud of dust announced the coming of the stage. Stacks were cashed and games cleaned up, and presently the male population of Cinnabar was in the street to catch as early a glimpse as might be of the newly converted one.

"I don't reckon now he's goin' to look sech a whole lot different, neither," said El Paso Bell, as she stood in front of the dance hall of which institution she was a pronounced ornament.

"I wonder would it do to ask Dave for to drink?" said Tutt, in a tone of vague inquiry.

"Shore," said Old Scotty, "and why not?"

"Oh, nuthin'; why not?" replied Tutt, as he watched the stage come up, "only he's nacherally a mighty peevish man that a-way, and I don't suppose now his enterin' the fold has reduced the restlessness of that six-shooter of his'n, none whatever."

"All the same," said Rosewood, who stood near at hand, "politeness 'mong gentlemen should be allers observed, an' I asks this yere Short Creek to drink as soon as ever he comes, and I ain't lookin' to see him take it none invidious, neither."

With a rattling of chains and a creaking of straps the stage and its six high-headed horses pulled up at the post-office door. The mail bags were kicked off, the Wells-Fargo boxes were tumbled into the street, and in the general rattle and crash the eagerly expected Short Creek Dave stepped upon the sidewalk in the midst of his friends. There was possibly a more eager scanning of his person in the thought that the great inward change might have its outward evidences—a more vigorous shaking of his hand, perhaps—but beyond this, curious interest did not go. Not a word nor look touching Short Creek's conversion betrayed the question which was tugging at the Cinnabar heart. Cinnabar was too polite, and then, again, Cinnabar was too cautious. Next to horse-stealing, curiosity is the greatest crime of the frontier, and one most ferociously resented. So Cinnabar just expressed its polite satisfaction in Short Creek Dave's return, and took it out in hand-shaking. The only incident worth a record was when Rosewood Jim said, in a tone of bland friendship:

"I don't reckon now, Dave, you're objectin' to whisky after your ride?"

"I ain't done so usual," said Dave, cheerfully, "but this yere time, Rosewood, I'll have to pass. Jest confidin' the truth to you all, I'm a little off on them beverages jest now, and I'm allowin' to tell you the ins and outs thereof a little later on. And now, if you all will excuse me, I'll canter over to the O. K. House and feed myse'f some."

"I shore reckon he's converted," said Tutt, as he shook his head gloomily. "I wouldn't care none, only it's me as gets Dave to go over to Tucson this yere time, and so I feels more or less responsible."

"Well, what of it?" said Old Scotty, with a sudden burst of energy. "I don't see no kick comin' to any one, nor why this yere's to be regarded. If Dave wants to be religious and sing them hymns a heap, you bet that's his American right. I'll jest gamble a hundred dollars Dave comes out all even and protects his game clear through."

The next day the excitement had begun to subside, when a notice posted on the post-office door caused it to rise again. The notice announced that Short Creek Dave would preach that evening in the big warehouse of the New York store.

"I reckon we better all go," said Rosewood Jim. "I'm goin' to turn up my box and close the game at 7.30 sharp, and

Benson says he's goin' to shut up the dance hall, seein' as how several of the ladies is due to sing a lot in the choir. We might jest as well turn out and make the thing a universal deal, and give Short Creek the best turn in the wheel, jest to start him along the new trail."

"That's whatever," said Tutt, who had recovered from his first gloom and now entered into the affair with great spirit.

That evening the New York warehouse was as brilliantly lighted as a wild and unstinted abundance of candles could make it. All Cinnabar was there. As a result of a discussion held in private with Short Creek Dave, and by that convert's own request, Rosewood Jim took a seat at the dry goods box, which was to serve as a pulpit, to assist in the conduct of the meeting. The congregation disposed itself about on the improvised benches, which the energy of Tutt had provided, and all was ready. At eight o'clock Short Creek Dave walked up the space in the centre reserved as an aisle, in company with Rosewood Jim, this latter gentleman carrying a new and giant Bible, which he placed on the dry goods box. Rapping gently on the box for order, Rosewood then addressed the meeting briefly.

"This yere is a public meeting of the camp," said Rosewood, "and I am asked by Dave to preside, which I accordin' do. No one need make any mistake about this yere gatherin' or its purposes, on account of my presence. This yere is a religious meetin'. I am not, myself, given that a-way, but I am allers glad to meet people what is, and see that they have a chance in for their ante and their game is protected. I am one of those, too, who believe a little religion wouldn't hurt this camp much. Next to a lynchin' I don't know of a more excellent influence in a Western camp than these yere meetin's. I ain't expectin' to be in on this play none myself, and jest set here in the name of order and for the purpose of a square deal. I now introduce to you a gentleman who is liable to be as good a preacher as ever banged a Bible — your townsman, Short Creek Dave."

"Mr. President," said Short Creek Dave, turning to Rosewood.

"Short Creek Dave," said Rosewood Jim, sententiously, at the same time bowing gravely in recognition.

"And ladies and gentlemen of Cinnebar," continued Dave, "I shall open this yere play with a prayer."

The prayer proceeded. It was fervent and earnest and replete with unique expression and personal allusion. In these last the congregation took a breathless interest. Toward the close Dave bent his energies in supplication for the regeneration of Bill Tutt, whom he represented in his orisons as a good man, but living a misguided and vicious life. The audience were listening with a grave and approving attention, when, at this juncture, came an interruption. It was Bill Tutt, who arose and addressed the chair.

"Mr. President," said Tutt, uneasily, "I rise to a p'int of order."

"The gent will state his p'int," responded Rosewood, at the same time rapping gently on the dry goods box.

"Well," said Tutt, drawing a long breath, "I objects to Dave a-tacklin' of the Redeemer for me, and a-makin' of statements which aims to show I'm nuthin' more'n a felon. This yere talk is liable to queer me up on high, and I objects to it."

"Prayer is a free-for-all game, and thar ain't no limit onto it," said Rosewood. "The chair, therefore, decides ag'in the p'int of order."

"Well, then," said Tutt, "a-waivin' of the usual appeal to the house, all I've got to say is this: I'm a peaceful man, and have allers been the friend of Short Creek Dave, and I even assists at and promotes this yere meetin'. But I gives notice yere now, if Dave keeps on a-malignin' of me to the Great White Throne as heretofore, I'll shore call on him to make them statements good with his gun as soon as the contreebution-box is passed."

"The chair informs the gent," said Rosewood, with vast dignity, "that Dave, bein' now a' evangelist, can't make no gun plays nor go canterin' out to shoots as of a former day. However, the chair recognizes the rights of the gentleman, and standin', as the chair does, in the position of lookout to this yere game, the chair will be ready to back the play with a 'Colt's 45' as soon as ever church is out, in person."

"Mr. President," said Dave, "jist let me get a word in yere. I've looked up things a little in the Bible, and I finds that Peter, who was one of the main guys of them days, scrupled not to fight. Now, I follers Peter's lead in this. With all due respect to that excellent apostle, he ain't got none the best of me. I might add, too, that while it gives me pain to be obliged to shoot up Deacon Tutt in the first half of the first

meetin' we holds in Cinnabar, still the path of dooty is cl'ar, and I shall shorely walk tharin, fearin' nuthin'. I therefore moves we adjourn ten minutes, and as thar's plenty of moon outside, if the chair will lend me its gun—I am not packin' sech frivolities no more, a-regardin' of 'em in the light of sinful bluffs—I shall trust to Providence to convince Bill Tutt I know my business, and that he's 'way off in this matter."

"Unless objection is heard, this yere meetin' will stand adjourned for fifteen minutes," said Rosewood, at the same time passing his six-shooter to Dave.

Thirty paces were stepped off, and the men stood up in the moonlit street, while the congregation made a line of admiration on the sidewalk.

"I counts one, two, three, and drops my hat," said Rosewood, "wharupon you all fires and advances at will. Be you all ready?"

The shooting began on the word, and when the smoke cleared away Tutt had a bullet in his shoulder.

"The congregation will now take its seats in the store," said Rosewood, "and the deal will be resoomed. Two of you'll carry Bill over to the hotel and fix him up all right. This yere shows conclloosive that Short Creek Dave is licensed from above to pray for whoever he pleases, and I'm mighty glad it occurred. It's shorely goin' to promote public confidence in his ministrations."

The concourse was duly in its seats when Dave again reached the pulpit.

"I will now resoome my intercessions for our onfortunate brother, Bill Tutt," said Dave, and he did.

This was Cinnabar's first preaching—albeit it has had many more since—under the instruction of the excellent Rev. Dave. On this first occasion he preached an earnest sermon, the dance-hall girls sang Rock of Ages with spirit and effect, and the wounded Tutt sent over five dollars to the contribution-box from the hotel where he lay with his wound.

"I knowed he would," said Rosewood Jim, as he received Tutt's contribution. "Bill Tutt is a reasonable man, and you can gamble religious truths allers assert themselves."

ETCHING : THE LAST BULLET *

BY EDITH M. NICHOLL



HE man was from the East, and somewhere beyond the jagged rim of the desert a wife and children watched, saying nightly: "To-morrow he will come!"

Two dead Apaches and his slain ox-team were all he could count for company; but he waited nevertheless. There might be live Apaches around that corner, and as long as there are beings in the world who are not Indians and toward whom a man's heart moves tenderly, it is worth while to be careful.

Presently he came out from behind his wagon. The craggy bluff was already spreading long fingers of shadow over the dumb brown village crouched at its feet, and probing the illimitable mournfulness of the desert. The man's Winchester was disabled by a hostile shot, and for his needle-gun he had but three bullets left. It was necessary, therefore, that he should descend to the Mexican settlement and provide himself with ammunition and a yoke of steers.

Half-way down the bluff he paused. While he lingered the west turned into a shield of brass dented by a lance blood-stained. Upon the shield the darkening peaks leaned heavily.

The man was waiting for what a scrambling of hoofs up the steep ascent might mean. The moments dragged, then the heads of three Apaches and one stolen mule hove into view. The crack of the needle-gun rent the still air twice, and after that there was but one Apache—and the mule. And the white man had but one bullet with which to save himself alive. Of this the Indian knew nothing, but he wanted the scalp of the paleface—and he wanted the contents of the wagon, too.

*Written for Short Stories.

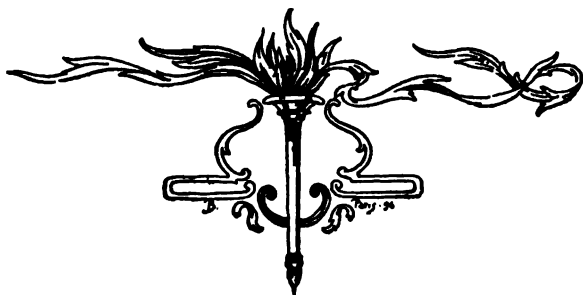
The Apache got behind the mule and fired, but the white man found shelter behind a big rock and took counsel with his own intelligence. In order to kill his foe he must shoot through the mule. If the bullet struck the ribs of the mule the life of the white man would pay the forfeit.

And he had but one bullet left, and the sun had dropped over the edge of the world.

His eyes swept the far olive spaces of the desert and the yet luminous arch of the sky, but neither in heaven nor on earth was there help for the man who was alone. With the courage born not of the coward's desperation or even of the hour's need he stepped out into the open.

The two shots rang out simultaneously. Then, had any live thing been there to witness, it might have been seen that the white man was wiping a few harmless drops of blood from his left hand, looking down the while—with a smile that in the woman who watched for him at home would have been tears—on the stiffening figures at his feet.

Then he shouldered his gun and went on down to the village.



THE STRING*

BY GUY DE MAUPASSANT

Famous Story Series



LONG all the roads leading to Goderville the peasants and their wives were going toward the town, for it was market-day. The men walked at any easy pace, the whole body thrown ahead at each movement of the long, crooked legs, men deformed by rude labor, by guiding the plow, which at once forces the right shoulder upward and twists the waist; by reaping, which spreads the knees, for solid footing; by all the patient and painful toil of the country. Their blue blouses, glossy with starch, as though varnished, ornamented at the neck and wrists by a simple pattern in white, swelled out round their bony chests, like captive balloons from which heads, arms and legs were protruding.

Some were leading by a cord a cow or calf, and their wives behind the animals were hastening their pace by the strokes of branches stripped of their leaves. The women carried on their arms great baskets, out of which hung, here and there, heads of chickens or ducks. They walked with shorter steps than their husbands, and at a more rapid pace, spare, erect and wrapped in scant shawls pinned across their flat chests, their heads enveloped in white linen drawn closely over the hair and surmounted by a bonnet.

Now a pleasure wagon passed at a jerky pony trot, shaking fantastically two men seated side by side, and a woman at the back of the vehicle, holding on to its sides to soften the hard jolts.

In the square of Goderville was a crowd—a jam of mingled

*Translated by Emar Soule, from the French, for Short Stories.

human beings and beasts. The horns of cattle, the high hats of the rich farmers and the head-dresses of the women, emerged from the surface of the assembly; and discordant voices, clamorous, bawling, kept up a continuous and savage babel, overtopped now and then by a shout from the robust lungs of a merry countryman, or the lowing of a cow attached to the wall of a house. All this mass was redolent of the stable and soilure, of milk, of hay, of sweat, and diffused that rank, penetrating odor, human and bestial, peculiar to people of the fields.

Master Hauchecorne of Bréauté had just arrived at Goderville, and was going toward the square when he saw on the ground a bit of string. Master Hauchecorne, economist, like every true Norman, thought anything that might be of use worth picking up, and he bent down painfully, for he suffered from rheumatism. He took up the piece of string, and was winding it carefully, when he noticed Malandin, the harness-maker, watching him from his doorway. The two men had long ago had a quarrel about a halter, and both being vindictive, had remained unfriendly. Hauchecorne was seized with a kind of shame, at thus being seen by his enemy picking a bit of twine out of the mud. He quickly hid his prize under his blouse, then in his breeches pocket; then he pretended to search the ground again for something which he did not find, and he went off toward the market, his head in advance, bent double by his infirmities.

He was forthwith lost in the noisy, shuffling crowd everywhere in motion from innumerable buyings and sellings. The peasants examined the cows, went away, came back, hesitated, always fearful of being outwitted, never daring to decide, peering into the face of the vender, endlessly searching to discover the ruse in the man and the fault in the beast.

The women, putting their great baskets down at their feet, had drawn out their fowls, which were lying on the ground, legs bound, eyes wild, combs scarlet. They listened to offers, held to their prices unmoved, their faces inscrutable; or suddenly deciding to accept an offer, cried out to the would-be purchaser slowly moving away:

"Agreed, Master Hutine; I will give it at your price."

Then little by little the square emptied, and the Angelus sounding noon, those who lived too far to go home dispersed in the various public houses.

At Jourdain's the great dining-room was full of feasters, as the vast court was full of vehicles of every pedigree—carts, gigs, tilburies, pleasure vans, carioles innumerable, yellow with mud, mended, out of order, lifting to heaven their shafts, like two arms, or nosing the ground, rear in the air.

Opposite the tables of diners the great chimney-piece, full of bright flame, threw a lively warmth on the backs of the row at the right. Three spits were turning, weighted with chickens, pigeons and legs of mutton, and a delectable odor of roast flesh and of juice streaming over its golden brown skin, escaped from the hearth, put every one in gay humor, and made mouths water. All the aristocracy of the plow dined there with Master Jourdain, innkeeper and horse-dealer, a shrewd fellow, who had his dollars.

The platters were passed and emptied as were the tankards of yellow cider. Each one talked of his affairs, his purchases, his sales. The harvest was discussed. The weather was good for grass, but a little sharp for grain.

All at once the drum sounded in the court before the house. All save a few indifferent fellows were quickly on their feet, and running to the door or the windows, their mouths full, their napkins in their hands.

When he had finished his roulade the public crier held forth in a jerky voice, cutting his phrases at the wrong place.

"It is made known to the inhabitants of Goderville and in general to all—the people present at market, that there was lost this morning, on the Benzeville road between—nine and ten o'clock, a wallet containing five hundred francs and important papers. You are asked to return—it to the town hall, without delay, or to the house of Master Fortuné Houlebrèque, of Manneville. There will be twenty francs reward."

Then the crier went on. One heard once more far off the muffled beating of his drum, and his voice enfeebled by the distance. Then they all began to talk of the event, estimating Master Houlebrèque's chances of finding or not finding his wallet.

And the meal went on.

They were finishing their coffee when the chief of police appeared at the door.

"Where is Master Hauchecorne of Bréauté?" he asked.

Hauchecorne, seated at the farther end of the table, replied: "I'm here."

The chief proceeded :

"Master Hauchecorne, will you have the kindness to accompany me to the town hall? The mayor wishes to speak with you."

The countryman, surprised and disquieted, emptied at a draught his little glass of rum, arose, and still more bent than in the morning, for the first movement after each relaxation was particularly difficult, he set out, repeating :

"I'm here, I'm here."

And he followed the chief.

The mayor was waiting for him, seated in his fauteuil. He was the notary of the vicinity, a big, solemn man, of pompous phrases.

"Master Hauchecorne," said he, "you were seen to pick up, on the Benzeville road, this morning, the wallet lost by Master Houlebrèque, of Manneville."

The peasant, astonished, looked at the mayor, frightened already, without knowing why, by this suspicion which had fallen on him.

"What! what! I picked up the wallet?"

"Yes; you yourself."

"Word of honor, I didn't even know of it."

"You were seen."

"Seen? What? Who saw me?"

"Monsieur Malandin, the harness-maker."

Then the old man remembered, understood, reddened with anger.

"He saw meh, th' lout? He saw meh pick up that string! See here, m'sieu mayor," and feeling in the bottom of his pocket, he drew out the bit of cord.

But the mayor, incredulous, shook his head.

"You won't make me believe, Master Hauchecorne, that Malandin, who is a man worthy of credence, took that thread for a wallet."

The peasant, furious, raised his hand, spit, to attest his innocence and declared :

"Yet it's the truth of God, the sacred truth, m'sieu mayor. On my soul and my salvation, I repeat it."

The mayor continued :

"After picking up the object you went on searching in the mud a long time to see if some piece of money mightn't have escaped you."

The old man gasped with indignation and fear.

"May one tell—may one tell lies like that to injure an honest man? May one say——"

His protest was vain. He was not believed. He was confronted with Monsieur Malandin, who repeated and sustained his former affirmation. For an hour the two men hurled insults at each other. Hauchecorne was searched, at his demand, and nothing was found on him. Finally the mayor, greatly perplexed, sent him away, warning him that he should inform the council and await orders.

The news spread. When he came out of the town hall the old man was surrounded and questioned with a curiosity serious or mocking, but with no ill-will in it. He began to recount the story of the string, but no one believed him—they only laughed.

He went on, stopped by everybody, stopping his acquaintances, beginning anew his tale and his protestations, turning his pockets inside out to prove that he had nothing.

"Move on, old quibbler," they said to him.

And he became angry, exasperated, feverish, sick at heart, at not being believed. He did not know what to do, but told his story over and over.

Night came. It was time to go home. He set out with three of his neighbors, to whom he pointed out the place where he had picked up the bit of cord, and all the way home he talked of his adventure. In the evening he made a circuit of the village of Bréauté to tell it to everybody. He met only incredulity. He was ill all night from his trouble.

The next day, toward one o'clock in the afternoon, Marius Paumelle, a farm hand, of Ymanville, returned the wallet and its contents to Monsieur Houlebrèque, of Manneville. The man stated, in effect, that he had found the wallet in the road, but not knowing how to read, had taken it home to his employer.

The news spread all about. Master Hauchecorne was told of it. He at once set out again on his travels, and began to narrate his story, completed by the dénouement. He was triumphant.

"It's not the thing 'at grieved me most, you understand," he said, "but it's the lie. Nothing harms you like being charged with a lie."

All day long he talked of his adventure. He told it on the

streets to men passing, in the taverns to men drinking, after church the next Sunday. He stopped strangers to tell it to them. Now he was tranquil, yet something half disturbed him, without his knowing exactly what. People had an amused air as they listened to him. They did not appear convinced. He thought he detected whispers behind his back.

Tuesday of the following week he betook himself to the market of Goderville, driven there by the need of exploiting his case. Malandin, standing in his doorway, began to laugh when he saw him passing. Why? He accosted a farmer of Criquetot, who did not let him finish, but giving him a blow in the pit of the stomach, cried in his face :

"Go your way, humbug!"

Master Hauchecorne was dumfounded, and more and more ill at ease. Why had he been called a humbug?

When he was seated at table in Jourdain's inn he again began to explain the affair. A jockey of Montivilliers cried to him :

"Come, come, old croaker, I know about your string!"

Hauchecorne stammered :

"But since it is found—the wallet?"

The other answered :

"Hold your tongue, father. One finds, another returns. I know nothing about it, but I implicate you."

The peasant was left choking. He understood at last. He was accused of having returned the wallet through an accomplice. He tried to protest. The whole table began to laugh. He could not finish his dinner, and went out in the midst of mockeries.

He returned home, ashamed and disgraced, strangling with rage and confusion, so much the more overwhelmed, in that he was capable, with his Norman duplicity, of doing the very thing of which he was accused, and even boasting of it as a good stroke. Confusedly he saw his innocence impossible to prove, his chicanery being well known, and he felt himself cut to the heart by the injustice of the suspicion.

Then he commenced again to recount his adventure, lengthening each day his story, adding each time new reasonings, more energetic protestations, more solemn oaths, which he invented and arranged in his hours of solitude, his mind occupied solely with the story of the string. He was believed the

less in proportion to the complication of his defence and ~~the~~ subtlety of his argument.

"That's the reasoning of a liar," they said behind his back.

He felt it, spent himself, wore his life out in useless efforts. He wasted away visibly. Wags now made him tell "the string" for their amusement, as one makes a soldier who has fought recount his battle. His mind, harassed and unsettled, grew feeble.

Toward the end of December he took to his bed. He died early in January, and in the delirium of his agony he attested his innocence, repeating:

"A little string . . . a little string . . . wait, here it is, m'sieu mayor!"



Anecdotes.

IN this department of short stories about people, compiled from various sources and contributed, an annual subscription to Short Stories will be given each month for the best original or selected anecdote sent in by any contributor. The Editor cannot undertake to return contributions or engage in correspondence over them. If the extract is valuable keep a copy of it. Communications should be marked "Anecdotes," care The Current Literature Publishing Co., Bryant Building, 55 Liberty St., New York, and should be signed with name or initials.

"De Real Dry Drou't."

The drouth in lower South Carolina was getting to be a serious matter. The upland crops were being parched, and the rice fields could not be flooded, because the Cooper River was salt up to its headwaters.

Scipio, as every one in that section knew, was not only the trusted foreman on Mr. B.'s rice plantation, but he was acknowledged to be a weather prophet with great honor in his own country. Accordingly at this very trying crisis Mr. B. called up Scipio and asked his opinion as to the prospects for rain. The old negro replied cheerfully:

"Well, boss, de drou't will soon be broke up, 'cause the alligators is hollerin' all ober de plantation."

Three days later, no rain having fallen, the planter again appealed to Scipio and was given positive assurance that the rain could not possibly ignore the cries of the alligators more than a day or two longer at farthest. At the end of another week, Mr. B. angrily informed Scipio that he was a fraud, and didn't know any more about the weather than the U. S. Weather Bureau.

The old prophet, with an air of injured innocence, and sinking his voice to a confidential whisper, said:

"Boss! I might as well tell you de trute. When de real dry drou't come he don't care a d—n for alligator."

J. K. B.

(In accordance with our offer, the subscription to Short Stories for one year has been awarded J. K. Blackman, 443 Second Street, Brooklyn, N. Y. for the foregoing, the best

A Natural Question.

Colonel Tillotson Yarborough was a fairly well-to-do country gentleman who dug the staff of life out of the fields of a productive farm. Colonel Tillotson was very fond of sweet potatoes, and he raised large quantities of the tubers each year, which he put away in banks made of earth and corn stalks. In this way they were prevented from rotting, and were always fresh for use when the old gentleman chose to make a draft on the bank.

But one morning when he went to the bank, the old Colonel found that some one had been there during the night, and the pile of potatoes within the inclosure of earth and corn stalks had been somewhat reduced.

"Ah," observed Tillotson, who was a very proper man in his speech, whether alone or in company with his well-bred friends, "some prowler by night hath relieved my store."

He looked for tracks, but could not find any distinguishable ones, for the ground round about was well tracked. Sensibly the good Colonel re-covered the bank, and kept silent in the hope of entrapping the thief whom, he reasoned, temptation would again sway in the direction of that depository of toothsome tubers.

One or two nights, until the eastern stars had slipped far past the meridian, Colonel Yarborough kept watch, but his watching proved to be in vain, and was discontinued.

But the watch had been abandoned only a few nights when the bank had again been visited, and the Colonel

ANECDOTES—Continued.

perienced the chagrin of looking in upon only a few stringy tubers on the floor of the depository. This time, however, a rain had fallen during the night, and a few well-defined tracks were found leading to and from the potato bank.

"Old Pomp!" ejaculated Colonel Tillotson as he glanced at the track.

Pompey was an old colored brother who lived in the neighborhood, and who had an unusually large foot. Colonel Yarborough left the tracks undisturbed, and sent for Pompey. The old darkey came.

"Pomp," said the Colonel, as the two neared the potato bank, "some one hath been prowling here by night, and hath taken away great quantities of my potatoes."

"S'dat so, Mars Tillotson?" asked Pompey in all innocence. "Da's bad, 'clar' to gracious!"

"And, Pompey," continued the Colonel, "I have found some tracks which look very much like they might have been made by your feet."

"Whar, whar, Mars Tillotson?" exclaimed the old darkey in an indignant tone, "wants to see 'em now!"

Colonel Yarborough pointed out a large track in the soft soil. "Put your foot into that track!" he commanded, "and let us see how it fits."

Pompey hesitated a moment, then carefully placed his foot in the track. The fit was perfect. Yarborough smiled when the old negro looked up and withdrew his foot. There was a moment's pause. Pompey stood with his hands on his hips, looking towards the ground. Suddenly he broke the silence.

"Mars Tillotson," he said, pointing his finger towards the Colonel's feet, which were also very large ones, "put your foot in de track."

Half in amusement the old gentleman complied, placing his foot carefully in the track. The fit was perfect. Pompey dropped his hands to his knees, and for a moment gazed upon the foot in the track. Then, half closing one eye, he

looked up into Colonel Yarborough's face, and exclaimed, "Mars Tillotson, who got de taters?"

CHARLES SLOAN REED.

Genus Omnivera.

At the six days' bicycle race in San Francisco recently finished, Teddy Hale, the Irish contestant, distinguished himself by his enormous appetite. His trainers were kept busy handing him food as he wheeled around the track. Miller was soon leading all the racers. During one of Teddy's circuitous laps, his trainer, to encourage him, whispered as he handed him a piece of pie: "Miller's taking cerebro-meningitis." Teddy wheeled on but when he got around again to his trainer, he yelled: "I'll take some of that, too."

WILLIAM A. TAAFFE.

A Clerical Error.

A Gaelic congregation in the Scottish Highlands had, for a pastor, a young man who had by home study gained a commendable knowledge of English.

To become more fluent in his use of the acquired tongue, he arranged to preach for a few weeks in the winter to an English-speaking congregation in the Lowlands.

The young man wished to acquit himself with honor on his first Sunday, but the Gaelic verb like the Teutonic article is elusive, and the adjective judged by Anglo-Saxon standards is where it should not be.

His text was: "The devil goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."

He divided it into three heads:

I. Who was the devil?

II. Where was the devil going?

III. What was the devil roaring at?

He announced it in this way:

I. Who the devil he was?

II. Where the devil was he going?

III. What the devil was he roaring at?

PERCY SHOLLENBERGER.



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ANECDOTES—Continued.

A Sympathetic Listener.

At a dinner party, not long ago, a certain young gentleman (and enthusiastic golfer) started in with the shellfish to enumerate to his partner the details of a match that he had been playing that day. It was not until the pudding was brought on that he suddenly bethought himself that he had been doing all the talking; indeed, the young lady had not said a single word during the entire progress of the meal. It was possible that she was not interested in the subject—incredible, but yet possible. "I am afraid that I have been boring you with this talk of the shop," he said, in half apology. "Oh, no; not at all," was the polite response. "Only what is golf?" W. G. S.

How Brown Enjoyed the Judge's Joke.

The following transpired during the trial of a case in Common Pleas Court No. —, — County, Pa., a few years ago.

A number of witnesses had been disposed of when the name of Sarah Money was called. The tipstaff called the name in the court room two or three times, but as she did not answer he went into the hall, and called, "Sarah Money! Sarah Money!!" Getting no response he entered the court room and reported that the witness could not be found. His Honor of course could not let pass the opportunity to make a word-play, and announced: "We will proceed without Sarah Money." This produced a hearty laugh among lawyers and audience. The tipstaff was on his feet in a moment, pounding on the clerk's desk and shouting, "Order! Order!"

Quiet having been restored, the business of the trial proceeded. His Honor's pun had been forgotten and all were absorbed with interest in the case, when suddenly, and without warning, Brown, the tipstaff, broke forth in loud "Haw, haw, haws!" Unable to control his laughter, he broke for the nearest door and as

he went out sounds like "Sarah Money" "ceremony" were distinguishable between his "Ha, ha!" Brown did not put in an appearance until closing time, and it was with difficulty that he performed his duties. All the way home, on the streets, and in the cars, he was an object of wondering interest to those who saw him—the unusual spectacle of a sedate and dignified elderly man going into spasms of laughter in public. Arrived home, Brown hung up his hat and overcoat and went to the kitchen, where Mrs. Brown was preparing supper. The old lady looked at him two or three times, and finally said:

"What's wrong with you, James; what are you grinning and chuckling about? I never saw you so silly. I hope you are not losing your mind. Out with it, I want to know."

"Don't be afraid, Mary," replied Brown; "Ha, ha, ho! it is only one of His Honor's jokes. We were trying a case to-day and one of the witnesses, Mary Money, failed to answer to her name. I reported her absence to His Honor, and he—ha, ha!—he—ha, ha!—said—ha, ha!—we will proceed without Mary Money—ha, ha, ha! ho, ho-o-o-o! The funniest thing I ever heard."

"Well," said Mrs. Brown, "is that all? I don't see anything funny about that."

"That's all right Mary, neither did I at first. You just wait half an hour and you'll see it—ha, ha, ha, ha-a-a-a! The best thing I ever heard."

BILLENSTON.

Two of Them.

Here is a story told of Patrick O'Mars, a private in the Ninth regulars. Not long ago he went to the colonel, who was a severe disciplinarian, for a two weeks' leave of absence.

"Well," said the Colonel, "what do you want a two weeks' furlough for?"

Patrick answered:

"Me woife is very sick, and the children are not well, and if ye didn't mind



THE AMPHORA*

BY GUSTAVE TOUDOUZE

"Then to the lip of this poor earthen urn
I leaned, the secret of my life to learn,
And lip to lip, it murmured, 'While you live,
Drink, for once dead, you never shall return.'"
—(Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám.)

“PADRONE!”
“Signor!”

“Give me your best wine and your easiest chair. I can testify that there is nothing more fatiguing, more parching to the throat than a few hours’ walk through Pompeii.”

“Whatever you wish, signor; red or white wine, Falernian, Caprian, Lacrymæ Christi? My cellar is noted for its stores, and might compete with the wine-cellars of the ancients.”

*Translated by S. B. Hale, from the French, for Short Stories. Illustrations by L. de Bernebrück.

"Bah! Why don't you say at once that you even have some of the old Pompeian wine?"

"And why not?"

"Doubtless it dates from the times of Cicero, or Pliny the Younger."

"Wines, like books, have their career."

"'Per Bacco,' padrone, you are surprisingly familiar with your authors, and you know how to apply your knowledge. Perhaps you will next offer me an amphora, like those used by Pliny the Elder on his fleet, at the time of the terrible eruption in which he lost his life."

The landlord, a large man, with the head of a Roman emperor, short, curly hair, and triple chin in heavy folds, smiled in a knowing way at his guest's speech. He left him, with a gesture imposing patience, and his wide shoulders disappeared down the dark stairway.

Left alone, the traveler, Louis B., a young architect about thirty years of age, threw himself into a seat, depositing on the table the long botanist's case which he had worn suspended from his shoulder. Taking out of it very carefully one of those little gray ashy lizards which swarm among the Pompeian ruins, he placed it under a glass.



The little animal, at first benumbed by its long confinement, gradually revived. After having made the circuit of its new prison several times, it stopped short, and fixed its brilliant and piercing eyes upon its captor.

The young architect, in the semi-twilight of the room, looked at it abstractedly. His thoughts had traveled far away from the inn. Once more he was traversing the avenue of sepulchres,* the fashionable promenade of ancient Pompeii. A sudden whim while there had impelled him to grasp the tiny lizard, just as it was gliding through one of the openings in the side of the tomb of Nævoleia Tyche. when the black shadows of the tombs lay heavy on the burning stones.

*Street of the Tombs.

The landlord returned, carefully holding a small amphora, of classic outline; the neck was wrapped around with linen and parchment, tied with a purple cord, and stamped with a large seal, so as to hermetically close it. He slyly winked, as he placed it before the traveler, saying:

"What do you think of this, signor?"

Louis took the amphora to examine it.

The original red hue of the clay having grown paler with age, bore some resemblance to the color of Vesuvian lava, and retained, as it were, the pallor of the sepulchre. In some places its substance had slightly crumbled, as if worn by the friction of centuries.

With a sort of admiring respect the young man gazed at this resuscitated relic of the past, which had risen from its grave in the ages. A half-effaced inscription ran in relief across the middle of the jar. Although some letters had completely disappeared, and there were some abbreviations, he succeeded in reconstructing and deciphering it, so that he read:

"M. SPVRIO CONS.
ANN. DCCCXXXI. A. V. C.
CÆCVBVM."

Which doubtless meant, being interpreted, that under the consulate of Marcus Spurius, the 831st year of the Roman era, and the year 79 of the Christian era, that is, the very year of the dread eruption which entombed Pompeii, wine of Cecuba, a wondrous product, sung by every poet, had been enclosed in this amphora.

Wine of Cecuba, co-eval with the Emperor Titus!

What was, perhaps, most noticeable and peculiar was the seal, in the impression of which on the crushed wax could be traced, beneath two outspread wings of graceful design, the Greek word: "Zoe" (Life). Perhaps a tribute to the wine's revivifying qualities, perhaps only a superstitious emblem.

The amphora appeared to be genuine, and the seal was intact.

"Where does this come from?"

"From the wine-cellar of the ædile Pansa, a connoisseur."

"It is really a very curious discovery."

"Rarer yet in this; it is still full."

"Would you have me believe in a wine of Cecuba eighteen hundreds years old?" asked Louis, laughing.

"Why not?"

"Absurd!"

"Listen!" The landlord shook the amphora, and they heard the gurgling of the liquid within.

"Is this a trick? How is it that Vesuvius itself did not dry it up?"

"Pompeii was engulfed and buried, but not burned."

"That does not sufficiently explain it."

"*'Chi lo sa?'* I don't try to explain it. I hear the wine murmur in its prison. Will you try it? It was too tart, too crude for the edile Pansa, but for you it is just at the right stage."

"No, indeed. I should not care for its flavor of pitch, its resinous aroma, *picatum*, as said the Pompeians, and I would



much prefer the growth of your own vineyard, the black, sweet wine, warmed by the heat of the sun and the volcano. It is rather heavy, but palatable. I don't feel much confidence in this fossil Cecuba."

"You are wrong."

"Come, my host, if I were inclined to be superstitious, I should distrust you and your wine. No sooner do I ask for such an impossible wine than you bring it, and in an amphora, over which at this very moment I have no doubt, is hovering the spirit of the elder Pliny."

"At least, signor, you might taste it."

Irreverently breaking the inviolate seal, the landlord removed the wrapping around the amphora's mouth, skimmed off the drop of oil, which protected the liquor from contact

with the air, then, handing an antique goblet to his guest, he filled it with half the contents of the amphora, the famous Cecuba wine, and smilingly withdrew.

Louis watched him, without remonstrance. He held the cup up before his eyes, and in spite of his incredulity, admired the ruby-red color of the wine, with a burnt topaz sparkle, as the sun shone through it.

But no sooner had the wine passed his lips than a sudden heat, as of liquid fire, ran through his veins, a subtle exaltation rose to his brain.

The goblet, falling from his hand, struck and broke the glass in which the lizard was confined. Instead of escaping, it glided with the swiftness of lightning along the neck of the amphora and disappeared within it, without being perceived by Louis, entranced in reverie.

* * * *

"Zoe!" suddenly exclaimed a clear and melodious voice.

Louis started, woke, drew his hand across his eyes, and stared at the spot from which the voice seemed to come.

The room was now in darkness, save for a fading glimmer of the sun's last ray, and out of this vague twilight there glided towards him the slender form of a young and marvelously beautiful woman.

"How came you here?" he asked in bewilderment.

"Dreamer!" murmured the young girl, laying her white, jewelled hand upon his, and gazing softly into his eyes.

Through the silken waves of her jet-black hair, smooth as satin, perfumed with rarest essences, was drawn a white fillet, like the line of a silver stream in the darkness of the night. The net which enfolded them sparkled with pearls and brilliant shells. Her rounded chin, touched with a soft dimple,



the straight classic nose, the voluptuous curve of the lips, were modeled on the lines of an antique cameo.

The long gray cloak in which the fair unknown was enveloped half concealed a white garment, the long tunic or stola, which gave her the appearance of some ancient Pom-



peian beauty, spared by the centuries, rescued from the lava of Vesuvius.

But what perplexed him more than her strange costume was to recognize in the gleaming eyes of the young woman a familiar glance whose sparkle had once before shone into

his, but yet he could not recall where he had ever seen her.

"I am called Nævoleia Tyche," said she, in clear, musical accents.

The architect started in astonishment.

"Nevoleia Tyche, the freed-woman of Julia?"

"Yes."

"The beloved of Caius Munatius Faustus?"

"I am she."

"To-day, I looked at, and admired, your tomb. Tell me, are you dead or living?"

"Listen!" And her voice was touched with a tender melancholy. "That tomb I built, while living, for myself and for Caius Faustus, to whom the decurions had awarded the honors of the bisellium, and I hoped some day to find there eternal rest. The gods willed it otherwise. Often, returning from my evening drives, before entering the town, I passed, and looked with pride at my superb mausoleum, on which were carved my own features and form; but who remembers now the beautiful and adored Nevoleia Tyche, who now would know her in her new shape, who now could distinguish her from her countless companions?"

Dazzled by the beauty of the Pompeian, bewitched by her entrancing voice, and unable in his bewildered mind to distinguish clearly between the boundaries of past and present, he tried in vain to comprehend the mystery of her strange words.

"Either I am dreaming, or else this wine has intoxicated me, and I have lost my senses," he murmured.

"Wretch, this is not a dream."

"Why do you reproach me?"

"In vain did I try to flee; in vain did I struggle. Your cruel hand seized me, just as I ventured one moment from the cold and gloomy refuge of my tomb into the bright sunshine, and was running across the stones, still warm with the kisses of Phœbus."

"The lizard!" And the young man, aghast, now recognized the eyes which had pierced his through the glass of their prison.

"I see, like many others, you do not know the secret of our metempsychosis, and you are ignorant of the mysterious revelations of Pythagoras. Not all of us perished at the time

of the catastrophe; Venus protected her children from the anger of the infernal deities, and changed us into lizards. I was saved, with many others, but my dwelling being destroyed, I sought refuge in the tomb I had built."

"Forgive me, Nevoleia!"

"Nay, I would not punish you for this ignorance, since, unwittingly through it, you have learned of our existence."

"Your generosity overwhelms me."

"And now, to our reconciliation, drink once more of the life-giving wine," said she, smiling in her seductive way, and filling the architect's cup.

"I drink," he said, "to the Pompeian Venus—to beauty and to grace; I drink to the divine, the lovely Nevoleia Tyche!"

He quaffed his cup, and on his brow he felt the soft touch of the fair one's lips.

* * * *

At daybreak, the first rays of the sun fell upon Louis asleep with his head on the table. Beside him on the floor lay the remains of a broken amphora, of antique shape.

Waking from his stupor, he passed his hand across his brow, and looked around him anxiously, as if seeking the presence of another person. But he was alone, with a broken jar, of which at that moment he remembered nothing.

The cool breeze roused him further, as the landlord opened the door.

He looked questioningly at his guest.

"Have I been asleep here?" said Louis, in confusion.

"It was your wish to sleep here, signor."

"What wine was that you gave me, padrone?"



"A famous one, and rare."

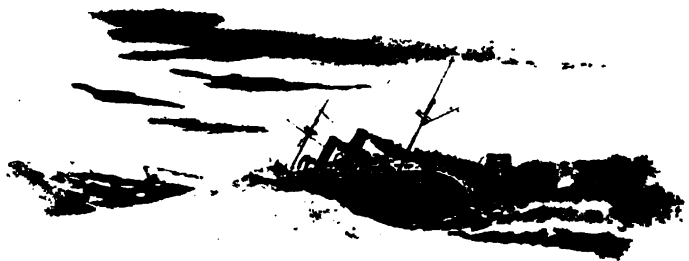
"Say rather, a magic philtre. My brain is still confused."

"I did not know that it was so heady, signor."

"Why, it was like drinking liquid fire."

"Well, just think, signor! Wine of '79, the year of the eruption!"





The MYSTERIOUS COCKSWAIN

By H.M. Blafow

THE big battleship was rolling majestically to and fro several miles off the coast when the fiery sun appeared above the horizon and bathed in golden hues the stunted palms and deserted shores of Cuba. The bluejackets had been turned to earlier than usual, and the work of the morning watch was already completed. On the forecastle the idlers and marines were performing their morning ablutions, while the jackies who had been washing down decks and cleaning ship were gathered in picturesque groups forward of the big turrets, excitedly discussing the news which had been brought forward by some of the wardroom boys.

"The first luff has been ordered to get out a steam launch and a cutter, and send some one into the harbor's mouth to cut a cable. It will be a dangerous job, for the boats will have to grapple for the cable right in range of the Spanish batteries."

Here, at last, was an end to the monotony of blockading service, and a chance to do something. For weeks the big ship had been steaming idly back and forth, without once firing a shot or even chasing a blockade runner. It was not strange that the news the wardroom boys were telling created a furor of excitement among the jackies on the forecastle, and the early appearance of the younger officers on the deck showed that "steerage" had also been informed of the intended expedition.

*Written for Short Stories. Illustrations by E. M. McKay.

Among others who heard the story on the forecastle was Cockswain Welch, who, with his trousers rolled up to his knees, and his muscular arms bared to the shoulder, had just come in from the third cutter, his especial pet and pride, where, with bucket and swab, he had been removing some of



the traces of cinders and soot deposited by the big funnels overhead.

Welch was not a popular man among his mates. He had but recently joined the ship, and, to the disgust of many an old shellback, he had hardly been billeted to the after-guard when he was rated a cockswain—vice Murphy, disgraced for

drunkenness—and now had charge of the best cutter on board. Many strange stories were being whispered about among Welch's mates concerning the new cockswain. He was too young to have been an apprentice, and there were some who said he was now serving his first enlistment, and had obtained his rating because of a pull with some of the youngsters in the steerage. Others averred that "Welch" was not the cockswain's real name, and that he had a story to tell which would make a fine sensation for any of the newspaper correspondents hovering about the squadron on the swift little towboats, could any one guess what it was. But Welch, by his quiet attention to duty, his reticence and gentlemanly manners, had hitherto remained a mystery, which bothered the curious ones among the jackies not a little. Withal he seemed to be a good seaman, and to have the confidence of his superiors, who, if they knew his secret, had kept it well to themselves.

"Pass the word for Welch, the cockswain of the third cutter!" piped the boatswain's mate. "Lay after to the quarter-deck!"

The message was taken up and repeated by the boatswain's mates in the different parts of the ship, and the cockswain, rolling down his duck trousers and setting his watch cap squarely on the top of his head, hurried off in response to the call.

Reaching the quarter-deck Welch stood at attention, forward of the steerage hatch, until his soldierly figure caught the eye of the first lieutenant, who was pacing nervously up and down the weather side.

"Welch!" the executive officer spoke sharply and stopped suddenly in his hurried walk.

The cockswain sprang forward, and bringing his bare heels together in the correct posture of "attention," saluted his superior.

"We're going to try and cut that d——n cable to-day, and shall send in the third cutter with the launch to do the work. It will require a cool head to handle the cutter under fire, and there are many chances that she may not come back unscathed. This work must be done, and everything will depend on the way the boats are handled. Lieutenant De Koven will have charge of the expedition, and Mr. Karl will go in the cutter. Only volunteers will be taken, and I have sent for you to give you a chance to go."

"Thank you, sir," said Welch, with a tone of self-possession, though his cheeks flushed.

"You may go forward and quietly pick out eight men for your boat. Take only volunteers and good, cool-headed men. When you have selected your crew report to Mr. Karl. That will do."

Welch saluted and hurried forward as fast as his legs would carry him. This was a chance he had been waiting, longing, praying for. The dangers of the expedition did not occur to him, and if they had he would have worried little about them. He now had an opportunity to distinguish himself, and perhaps show some people that—well, he would not think of this just now; but Cockswain Welch did think of these things just the same, and the more he thought of them the more anxious he was to start on the perilous expedition.

Eight men for the cutter were quickly selected. He might have had twenty times as many had he been ordered to take them; but the chosen ones were all strong, able men, who could be relied on to do their duty under the most trying circumstances.

Getting his clothes-bag from the bag-room, as the other men were doing, Welch dressed in a clean working suit, with his big black kerchief correctly knotted about his throat, and hurried down to report to Mr. Karl.

In the steerage the naval cadets and junior officers were just finishing an early breakfast, and the Japanese servants were hurrying back and forth with tempting dishes and steaming pots of coffee. The cockswain's knock at the door brought the steerage steward, and to him Welch repeated his message. His words were heard by the youngsters at the table, and one of them sang out in clear, boyish tones:

"Come in, Welch."

The cockswain, hat in hand, entered the room and found himself facing Naval Cadet Karl, who was making short work of a regulation navy breakfast of bacon and eggs.

"I was ordered to report to you, sir," said Welch.

"All right, cockswain, come in here; I want to see you a minute," and Karl, jumping up from the table, pushed open the door of his stateroom and motioned to Welch to enter the little room where the tumbled bunks and general untidy appearance showed that Karl's Japanese boy had not yet put this apartment in condition for inspection.

Such an unusual proceeding on the part of their messmate as to invite a sailor into his stateroom made the eyes of the other young gentlemen at the table protrude from their sockets.

"Karl always was a genius in eccentricity, but this move beats me," remarked one of the cadets.

There was but one chair in the stateroom, and in this Karl seated the seaman as soon as the heavy drapery at the door had fallen behind them.



"See here, Andrew"—Karl was visibly excited, and his voice trembled a little as he spoke—"you're going with me to-day into a veritable hell trap, and before we go I want to tell you something. Until after you had told the commandant of cadets at the Academy that you were guilty of 'gouging' at that 'skinny' exam., I never knew that you cared anything for my sister. I acted like a coward about that affair, and I am willing to acknowledge it. I permitted you to take the whole blame because I was too cowardly to let on that I was the guilty person. I asked you to help me at that examination, and you did it. When old Crook saw on the floor that piece of paper with the skinny problem on it, which you had tried to pass to me, I should

have owned up at once that the problem was intended for me and not for you. Well, I didn't own up to it, as I should have done." Karl's face was now flushed, and he was raising his voice a little. "You were dismissed, and never lisped a word to anybody in the Academy about my treachery.

"You took my punishment; you were disgraced and your life ruined. You could have ruined me had you been less of a man. No, no"—Welch had now jumped to his feet and was trying to say something—"I say you could have ruined me, but you took my disgrace and for my sake became a homeless wanderer. After you were dismissed from the Academy I

learned that Nellie loved you. Yes; she wrote me that she loved you, and, see, here is the letter."

Karl drew from a pigeon-hole in his desk a dainty envelope and passed it to Welch, who sat with his hand shading his eyes, as if dazed.

"Then I began to see how selfishly I had behaved," Karl went on. "When you came on board this ship, an enlisted man, I knew you at once, in spite of your moustache and your changed appearance; but Bill and the other fellows didn't recognize you. I have done what I could for you here, but it hasn't been much that I could do. I knew you would want to go on this cable-cutting trip, and I asked the first luff to send you with me in the cutter.

"I have kept my secret, but in this letter, which I have just written, I have told the fellows all about you, and how you took my punishment like a hero—yes, that's the word, a hero, for you are a hero, Andrew, and I'm a confounded rascal. If I don't get back from this trip we are going on to-day the boys will find this letter in my desk. I have written home, too"—and Karl's face became pale again, and he nervously shuffled the papers in his desk. "Nellie will know about it, too. I have told her all in this letter."

The naval cadet and the seaman faced each other in silence a moment, then they separated, each to prepare for the hazardous venture in which they were to participate.

When Welch walked out through the steerage country to the forecabin, tightly clasping in his hand the dainty envelope Karl had given him, his face was paler than usual.

At eleven o'clock the battleship and the rest of the squadron moved in toward the harbor and opened fire on the Spanish batteries, several miles distant. While the big guns roared and the shells were flying toward the beach, sending the Spanish gunners scurrying like frightened rats into their holes, the steam launch with the cutter in tow shoved off from the battleship.

The location of the cable was known, and when the cutter was a mile from shore the grappling irons were thrown overboard and the work was begun in earnest. The cutter, cast adrift from the launch, worked in toward the shore, while the launch moved out into the harbor and was out of range when the Spaniards opened fire.

Soon the water about the cutter fairly sizzled with the rain

of rapid-fire projectiles, but the Yankee tars, with their faces hard set and their eyes fixed on the two men handling the grappling lines, pulled doggedly away at the oars.

Karl and Cockswain Welch kept the boat moving steadily in toward the beach, nearer and nearer the batteries. The poor marksmanship of the Spaniards caused the cutter's crew to smile grimly, and one irrepressible Irishman in the bow muttered something under his breath that caused a laugh among the oarsmen.

"Silence in the boat!" commanded Karl. "Cockswain We——"

Crash! crash! and a shriek of pain from the stroke oarsman.



The flying splinters wounded three or four of the men, and the boat officer was down with a scarlet stream staining his white service blouse, just below the heart. A well-directed shot from a rapid-fire gun on the beach had smashed a hole through the gunwale, and at the same time a ball from a Mauser rifle had brought down Karl.

The naval cadet was moaning with pain and bleeding terribly from his wound. One of the men pulling at stroke was dead, and his thwart-mate badly wounded. Fortunately, the

boat was not severely damaged. After a moment of confusion the calm voice of Cocksain Welch brought the cutter back on its course and the grappling for the cable went on.

On the battleship the accident to the cutter was witnessed, and the firing was redoubled, but the rain of lead and steel from the shore continued, and the cutter's crew no longer laughed as they tugged at their oars. The men at the grappling lines were leaning over the side of the boat, and, encouraged by the coolness of the cocksain, whose face betrayed not the slightest anxiety or fear, their work went steadily on.

"We've got it!" shouted both the seamen in almost one voice as the iron hooks dragging along the bottom caught the big cable.

Welch waved the wigwag flag for the launch, which quickly



headed toward the cutter and came gallantly down to them at full speed, amid a veritable hell of shot and shell. All hands on the grappling line, and the big cable was hauled up over the side of the boat, and just as Lieutenant De Koven came alongside with the launch, Welch brought the axe down upon the slimy cable and, after two or three strokes, severed it, the two ends sinking to the bottom, one of them moored by a water breaker attached to the grappling line.

By this time several other men were down in the bottom of the cutter, while the sides and floor gratings were splashed with blood. Quickly taking the cutter in tow, the launch headed out toward the fleet and out of range.

Cocksain Welch and the cutter's crew were the heroes of the hour. Down in the sick bay several badly wounded

sailors and Cadet Karl were being tenderly cared for by the medical men of the ship, while two dead bodies were prepared for the sacred service of the morrow.

When Karl was invalided home on the dispatch boat Cockswain Welch took him out to her on the third cutter. As the boat was speeding along Welch bent over the young officer and said:

"Here is the letter you left to be read by the officers in the steerage. I got it from your desk, and you see the seal hasn't been broken. And, if you will, sir," continued Welch, as he drew from his blouse another envelope, addressed in a characteristic hand, "I wish you would give this letter to your sister for me."

"God bless you, Welch," murmured Karl, "you are a hero if ever there was one. Your letter shall be delivered if I reach home alive."

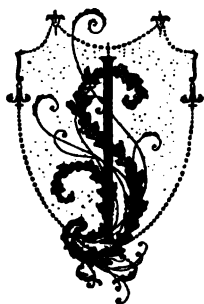
The officers on the dispatch boat marveled much as they helped Karl over the side to see him stop at the gangway and warmly shake the tall cockswain's hand, while the tears rolled down the cadet's pale cheeks.

A few weeks later Cockswain Welch received an official document containing his discharge from the navy, and inclosed in another envelope, addressed to "B. D. Welch, U. S. S. M.," was a commission of acting ensign, United States Navy, signed by Secretary Long, and addressed to Mr. Andrew S. Carter. But a letter in a lady's handwriting received by B. D. Welch was far more interesting to its recipient than either of those.



WHAT I OWE MICHAEL RAGSDALE*

BY FRANCIS LIVINGSTON



It was never my good fortune to meet Michael Ragsdale, although once his existence and mine touched one another very nearly.

A man who had come in contact with him at a club in Montreal once told me that he never encountered a more charming and courteous gentleman, and that Ragsdale was as great a genius in his way as Napoleon and Goethe were in theirs. Another individual, who had had in San Francisco some experience with Mr. Ragsdale's methods, assured me that no greater villain ever went unhung. So much depends upon the point of view.

The time to which I refer when this interesting person crossed my path (to use a good old theatrical phrase) was in March three years ago. I was then playing a rather unimportant character part in a highly successful piece which had run all the season at the New York Theatre. It was the last week in Lent, and the theatre was closed temporarily. I was glad of the rest, for the season had been a long disappointment to me. This was because I had not been allowed to play the part of the Cardinal. Only an actor who knows himself to be well fitted to interpret a strong rôle and sees it given to some one else can appreciate my feelings.

The whole city was then ringing with the famous Blemworth-Dally diamond robbery, and had been for a week. But not the most brilliant jewel in that whole superb collection seemed as bright to my mind as did the lost opportunity to play the part of the Cardinal. This is one of the bitter experiences associated with my profession.

*Written for Short Stories.

On Tuesday of Holy Week I was reminded that other people beside myself had their troubles. At four o'clock in the afternoon I received by special messenger the following strange note:

"MY DEAR CROWSMITH:

"I find myself suddenly in deep trouble, and you can help me if you will. I am over in Jersey City, at Taylor's Hotel. I must keep out of New York for a while, and it is highly important that I should not be seen and recognized. Will you come over here this evening and bring me one or two of your wigs and a beard. Also please bring a revolver, if possible, as I would feel safer with it. This sounds very mysterious, but I will explain all when I see you. Do not disappoint me, old friend—this is a matter of life and death. Yours in distress,

"H. WILLEY.

"Destroy this."

Harry Willey was a clever comedian, whose erratic nature had more than once caused him to become entangled in the meshes of the law. But he had a big heart, and had often proved his friendship for me. I could not neglect him in this extremity, and while making all manner of conjectures regarding the nature of this latest scrape of his, I set about carrying out his instructions.

I packed a handbag with a few articles of clothing I thought he might want, and put in two wigs, a false beard and a cavalry revolver I owned. Then, as a further aid to disguise, I added a pair of green goggles. It is necessary to my story that I relate my subsequent movements in some detail.

I left my rooms in the Berkshire at 5.30 o'clock, and as I went out I received my last mail, consisting only of a paper, from the clerk at the desk with whom I left my key.

I then took the elevated train for the ferry. On my way down I opened the paper, which was addressed to me in a strange hand. It was a copy of an illustrated weekly publication issued that day. As I turned the leaves I came suddenly upon a full-page portrait of myself.

Pleased as I was at this mark of recognition of my artistic merit I could not think how the editors had obtained the picture. I had not been asked for one, nor could I recall the photograph of which it was a reproduction. From the picture my

eyes wandered to the lettering beneath it, and I gave a great start as I read:

"Michael Ragsdale, bank-robber, forger, counterfeiter and expert thief, the man who committed the great Blemworth-Dally diamond robbery, and for whom the entire police force of this city is searching.—From portrait 9871, in the Rogues' Gallery."

With the realization that this was not my likeness at all, but that of a vicious criminal, came a decidedly disagreeable sensation.

This Michael Ragsdale, then, looked so much like me that I, myself, was deceived by his picture. The resemblance was certainly amazing. After a further contemplation of the face of this worthy, I turned to the sketch of his life on the opposite page.

No one knew whence this wonderful man, with the face of an ascetic, and the soul of an arch-fiend, had come. He was believed to have been born in New South Wales. It was certain that long before he was twenty he was fairly launched upon a life of crime in that colony. He appeared in England in 1876, and was concerned in several daring robberies there. He went successively to Paris, Vienna and Berlin, with always the same story of successful knavery. Twice only was he captured on the continent, and both times made his escape under such remarkable circumstances as to suggest the supernatural.

Then he came to America. In San Francisco he directed the celebrated Wattles Bank robbery in which a clerk was drugged and a watchman killed. In Chicago he turned up as the head of a gang of counterfeiters. Here, after months of successful operation, he was captured, but on the very evening of his arrest knocked senseless with the handcuffs which bound him the detective who had him in charge, and vanished like a wraith. An indictment was found against him, but it was subsequently quietly dismissed.

In New Orleans he was again taken and escaped from a prison yard, to have egress from which he must have scaled a wall forty feet high. No trace of rope or ladder was found. Many other such instances were given.

His appearance in New York in 1891, and his part in the great robbery by which Duhamel & Co., the jewelers, lost \$100,000, were well remembered. On that occasion, too, he was arrested, and this was the only time on record that Michael

Ragsdale was ever brought to trial. The great sensation which his acquittal on a technicality caused would not soon be forgotten. From the day he bowed politely to the General Sessions judge, who frowningly discharged him, up to the night of the Blemworth-Dally diamond robbery, Michael Ragsdale had not again been seen in New York.

Then followed a graphic description of the famous sensation. No more brilliant second-story feat was to be found in the annals of crime. Mr. and Mrs. Blemworth-Dally were at the theatre. The servants were distributed through the house in a manner to further the ends of this Napoleon of thieves, as though he himself had directed their movements. Whether he had a confederate in the house was not known. After the robbery the safe in the second-story front room was found closed and locked, but the jewels it contained were gone.

The success of Ragsdale's plans was imperiled at the last moment, but again his wonderful luck saved him. Mr. Dally had forgotten his opera glasses, and sent his man back for them. The servant, ascending the stairs, saw the thief in the hall and made a leap for him. Ragsdale had recourse to no noisy firearms or tell-tale knives, but a blow from his powerful arm sent the man backward down the flight of stairs.

Stunned, and with a broken arm, the plucky fellow staggered to the front door and shouted an alarm. It was answered promptly, but Ragsdale had vanished into the night, and the jewels with him. Within twenty minutes the full story of the robbery was at Police Headquarters.

Mr. Dally's man had obtained a good view of the burglar in the brightly lighted hall, and when he said "he looked like a gentleman and something like a clergyman," "Mike Ragsdale" was the name which sprang to the mind of every detective who heard the description.

It was a splendid case by which to test the merits of the chief of the Detective Bureau, who was a new man in the position. From that night on every avenue of escape from the city was watched by lynx-eyed men, each of whom had the features of Michael Ragsdale burned into his brain.

When I had finished reading this entertaining sketch I turned again to the portrait.

"Well, Ragsdale, my double," I said, "we are both artists in our way, it seems, only you are recognized as such, while I—ah, if I only had the part of the Cardinal!" I sighed as my

thoughts returned to the grievance which beset me like an obsession.

With my penknife I cut the picture from the paper and put it in my pocket. We were now at my station. I took up my bag and leaving the train walked toward the ferry. A boat had just come in. I hurried forward and joined the crowd pressing toward it. Suddenly I felt each arm grasped from behind by a pair of strong hands. I turned and saw a grim face and stalwart figure on either side.

"What does this mean?" I demanded. A third figure appeared in front of me and slipped a pair of steel bracelets over my wrist. Then I had my answer.

"It means, Mike Ragsdale, that we want you."

In vain I declared I was not Mike Ragsdale, but only an innocent actor named Crowsmith on his way to see a friend.

The detectives hurried me along through the street without heeding my words, intent only upon escaping the crowd which had begun to gather. When I found that I must go with them I protested against the indignity of the handcuffs, but without avail. Silently they rushed me up to Broadway, where we boarded a cable car. A detective sat on each side of me, two others sat opposite, and on the rear platform were two more. I was certainly an important capture.

After I had recovered from the first shock occasioned by my arrest and saw that the detectives were considerably aiding me in concealing my manacles, I even saw a grim humor in the situation. I promised myself that this false arrest should be dearly paid for, and the thought even crossed my mind that it might be a good advertisement for William Crowsmith, comedian.

When we arrived at Police Headquarters the news of an important arrest had evidently preceded us. The corridor was filled with policemen and newspaper men. I was taken at once into the private room of Captain Fitzallen, chief of the Detective Bureau. He was a tall, fine-looking man, who sat at his desk with an appearance of great composure, which seemed, I thought, not quite genuine. He gave one quick glance at me and then addressed the man who still held me firmly by the right arm.

"Detective-Sergeant Canby," he said, "you are deserving of great credit for having effected the capture of one of the most dangerous criminals of the century. I confess I did not attach

most importance to that anonymous letter. Your judgment was better than mine, and I shall recommend you for promotion. Well, Mr. Ragsdale," addressing me in a tone of light raillery, "I suppose you are ready to tell me now where those jewels are."

"I am not Mr. Ragsdale," I said, with what dignity I could command, "but an actor of the New York Theatre Company. My name is William Crow Smith, and I am the victim of an outrageous blunder for which some one shall suffer."

The captain raised his eyebrows slightly, lit a cigar and said: "What is in that bag?"

Officer Canby forced the slight lock and enumerated the articles as he took them out: "One brown wig, one light wig, one brown beard and moustache, a pair of green goggles, one large revolver"—the rest were articles of clothing.

"Mr. Ragsdale pays a high compliment to the New York police," said the captain in the same mocking tone, "in not deeming it worth while to assume these clumsy disguises here. He was doubtless reserving them for 'the road.'"

Then my pockets were searched. I had no letters, having destroyed Willey's, and my pocketbook contained no cards. The only thing of interest found here was the portrait of Ragsdale.

"Ah, the picture in this week's Illustration—an excellent one it is, too," said the captain; "it seems to have struck his fancy. How many were there in the gang, Ragsdale?" this in an easy, confidential tone.

"I belong to no 'gang,'" I said, my voice shaking with anger, "and I repeat that I am not Ragsdale."

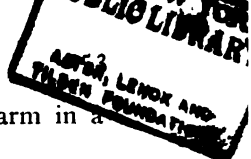
Captain Fitzallen still paid not the slightest attention to what I said. He beckoned to Canby and the other detective, and the three held a long whispered consultation. It was interrupted by a sharp rap at the door, and a policeman hurried in.

"Walters is here, captain," he said, saluting.

Captain Fitzallen turned to me and said in a hard voice:

"Ragsdale, I am going to take off your handcuffs. There are ten armed men in this room, and I now instruct each of these men that if you raise your hand or take one step forward they are to shoot you—and shoot to kill."

The handcuffs removed I was placed against the wall in line with half a dozen men in plain clothes. At a signal the policeman who had saluted returned, bringing a man who had a dis-



colored circle around his left eye and carried one arm in a sling.

"Walters," said Captain Fitzallen, "if you see here the man whom you saw on the night of the 21st—the man who knocked you downstairs, put your hand on him.

Walters glanced along the line once. His face was very pale as he took two steps forward and pointed at me.

"That is the man," he said.

"Touch him," said Captain Fitzallen. The man came nearer, put a finger on my shoulder and stepped back quickly.

"That is all, thank you," said the captain. His face indicated the greatest satisfaction.

"Captain," said the policeman, returning after having showed Walters out, "the newspaper men want to know if they can come in now."

"When I am ready for them I will send for them," said the captain sharply. "Now, Ragsdale——"

"Captain Fitzallen!" I burst out, feeling myself possessed of a sudden fury, "do you mean to ignore me utterly? I have told you again and again that I am not Michael Ragsdale, and have told you who I am. I, an innocent man, have been dragged through the streets in a most humiliating manner, and have been threatened by you and your men because of my resemblance—a very strong one I admit—to a vile criminal. The resemblance is so striking as to have deceived even myself, for when I saw that picture this afternoon I thought it was my own. You must not treat me like this—you must listen to me."

My words had had an effect, I could see, and I followed up my advantage, speaking earnestly but more calmly:

"I know from the papers that you have not been long in your present position. To have effected the capture of this celebrated thief, who has eluded justice for all these years, would make your name famous on both sides of the ocean. But to let it go forth to the world that you have made this brilliant catch, and find out in the morning that you have bagged only a harmless actor, will make a laughing stock of you. Surely you will lose nothing by moving carefully, and I can prove my identity in thirty minutes."

The captain was visibly interested. He paused a moment before he said:

"How can you prove that what you claim is true?"

"By simply sending a line to the manager of the New York Theatre, or to one of my friends at the 'Berkshire,' where I live. Please give me some paper and a pencil."

The captain hesitated, again eyeing me closely. Then he took a pad of paper from his desk.

"It seems ridiculous under the circumstances," he muttered, "but I will do it."

I wrote two notes both to the same effect, that by a singular mistake I had been arrested as the man who had committed the Blemworth-Dally robbery, and begging the recipient to come at once to Police Headquarters and identify me.

"One of these notes is to Mr. Hopkins, manager of the New York," I told Captain Fitzallen. "The theatre is closed, and your messenger may not be able to find him easily. The other note is to my friend, Mr. Rostyn, who lives at the 'Berkshire.' He is almost sure to be at home at this hour. Should he not be, have your messenger show the note to the proprietor or the clerk at the desk. Every one about the house knows me."

The captain took the notes, read both of them, and pressed a button on his desk for a messenger.

After the man had gone he did not speak to me again, but I caught him looking at me in a peculiar manner two or three times, and I felt that in spite of the identification made by Mr. Blemworth-Dally's man he was not altogether satisfied with the night's work.

I do not think he relished my presence in the room during the wait, for calling in the two principal detectives, he gave them some whispered order, and I was marched out between them. I was taken to a large, brightly lighted cell, and a comfortable chair was handed in to me. The two men did not leave the cell door after I was locked in.

The time of waiting seemed very long, but at length the summons came to bring me in.

I walked between the two men back into the captain's room.

It was full of people. The captain sat at his desk, and beside him stood the messenger. Detectives in plain clothes and men in uniform were all about. Just within the door stood a group of a dozen newspaper men and artists, with pad and pencil in hand. As I entered a sudden stillness fell upon the room. It was broken only by the light scratching of the pencils of the artists as they sketched my picture. I wondered

why they were doing it, and looked at Captain Fitzallen, expecting his apology for arresting and detaining me.

He was looking at me sternly. I became suddenly aware that the detectives retained a tight hold on my arms.

The voice of Captain Fitzallen, in harsh, staccato tones, broke the silence:

"Well, Ragsdale, perhaps you will be good enough to tell me what that monkey trick of yours meant."

"Why do you continue to address me by that name?" I said. "As for your insulting remark, I don't know what it means."

"It means," he said, speaking slowly and distinctly, "that Mr. William Crowsmith, the actor, whom you claim to be, is at home in bed."

"It is a lie!" I burst out, "for I am William Crowsmith, and it is you who have tricked me. You did not send the messenger, so sure were you of your game."

The captain smiled indulgently.

"Riggs," he said, "will you repeat for Mr. Ragsdale and these gentlemen of the press all that you told me a few minutes ago."

Riggs stepped forward and, with evident appreciation of the importance of his story, began:

"I first went to Manager Hopkins' house in Forty-sixth street. He wasn't there, and his whereabouts wasn't known. Then I went up to the 'Berkshire' and found Mr. Rostyn in. He is a tall gentleman, with reddish face and hair white on the temples. I gave him the note, and after he had read it he said: 'Why, this is very strange, I can't understand it. Mr. Crowsmith was here in this room a little while ago, and is in his own apartment now, unless I am very much mistaken.'"

"He asked me what time the man was arrested. I said six o'clock. He said, 'It was nearly seven, I know, when Crowsmith came in here. He was suffering from the toothache. He had started over to Jersey to see a friend, he said, but turned back because his tooth hurt him so. I gave him something to put on it, and he left, saying he was going right to bed.'"

"Then Mr. Rostyn looked at the note again and remarked that it did look like Crowsmith's writing."

"Mr. Ragsdale is an expert penman, as we all know," interjected Officer Canby.

"And then," continued Riggs, "he said he'd go and see, and

told me I could come along if I liked. I followed him down the hall and turned into another little hall about thirty feet away, and he rapped on a door. He had to rap twice before he got an answer, and then the gentleman inside said very cross-like, 'Well, what do you want?'

"'It's me, Crowsmith,' said Mr. Rostyn; 'I want to speak to you a minute.'

"'What is it, Rostyn?' he said, still quite impatient-like.

"'You're not in any trouble are you?' asked Mr. Rostyn.

"'Yes, I am, in a lot of trouble with this infernal tooth,' and the gentleman swore a little; 'did you wake me up to ask me that?'

"'No,' says the other one, 'but I've got a note from you here saying you've been arrested and that you're in prison. You haven't been arrested, have you?'

"Then Mr. Crowsmith swore a good deal more, and we could hear him punching his pillows. He told Mr. Rostyn he thought it was a mean trick in him coming and waking him up when he knew he was suffering, just to play a poor joke on him. Mr. Rostyn seemed to feel pretty bad about it himself, and told me to come back and tell you, sir, that Mr. Crowsmith was in bed and that he guessed you'd caught a slick one."

I listened to this amazing recital first with indignation and then with astonishment. The man was telling the truth—that was evident. Then, suddenly, I felt the half-hypnotic influence of all those eyes fastened upon me. Every man in that room believed me to be a clumsy liar, and had it not been proved that I was one?

The test I, myself, proposed had resulted in the discovery that the man I claimed to be was at his home, while the friend I appealed to had pronounced me a "slick one." What could I say? I had no longer strength or indignation left for another outburst. My only feeling was one of shame, and muttering something, I did not know what, I bowed my head.

The Clarion of the following morning described this scene far more graphically than I can.

"When Ragsdale was brought in," it said, "his appearance surprised those who had never seen him before. He is of medium height, but his figure is upright and commanding. He has a fine, tranquil eye and a scholarly mouth and jaw. He gazed about the room with an air of conscious, inborn superiority to the men who held him prisoner. His expression

of intense astonishment as he listened to the recital of Captain Fitzallen's messenger was more admirably acted than the finest histrionic effort of Mr. William Crowsmith. When it was over, however, and we all watched him with bated breath, the realization that the game was up seemed to strike him suddenly. The charmed life had come to an end. In Captain Fitzallen this master-thief and arch-criminal had at last met his match. A deep blush succeeded by a grayish pallor o'erspread his face. The flexible mouth moved, but no words came. Then the thin lips were drawn back tightly, exposing the strong, white fangs. A baleful gleam shot from the narrowed eyes. The expression was that of a wolf which sees vanishing the last hope of escape from the trap which clutches him. Michael Ragsdale lowered his head. He owned himself beaten at last.

"What his object was no one can guess. The scheme was a clumsy one, for his resemblance to the actor is not in any way marked, and this is probably the first time in his career that Michael Ragsdale has ever been accused of clumsiness. He wanted to gain time, evidently, but whatever his hope it perished miserably, and one could not suppress a feeling akin to pity for the man as he was led back to his cell in almost a state of collapse.

"Captain Fitzallen probably suspected an attempt at suicide, for he ordered a double guard placed over Ragsdale for the night."

That night of horror I shall not attempt to describe. Before morning I was half persuaded that I was, in fact, Ragsdale, and that I had been leading some hideous dual existence of which I was only now becoming dimly aware. I wondered what my punishment would be, for I saw no possible hope of escape now. It seemed useless to send for any more of my friends, for was I not at home asleep?—and to-morrow I would be walking about among them. I thought that possibly William Crowsmith would come to the prison or the courtroom to look at me, and I felt a vague curiosity to see him. I even remembered poor Willey waiting for me in Jersey City. He would be greatly disappointed, but perhaps the other Mr. Crowsmith would go when his tooth got better.

Next morning Jefferson Market Police Court contained an unaccustomed assemblage. The District-Attorney was present in person, with several of his assistants. On the bench,

beside the magistrate, sat a judge from the Court of General Sessions. The Chief of Police was there with Captain Fitzallen, and so was Mr. Blemworth-Dally, and half a dozen of his aristocratic friends. Besides these there were three or four of the most celebrated criminal lawyers in the city. Outside the rail every inch of space was filled with the great public, and the doors were surrounded with hundreds of others clamoring for admission. All knew from the morning papers that Michael Ragsdale had been taken the night before, and that he was to be arraigned in Jefferson Market Court this morning.

I knew nothing of all these people until afterward, for I paid little attention to externals then. I was only anxious to get away from that crowd, whose eyes I could feel staring at me as at some caged beast.

Mr. Dally told his story, and Mr. Dally's man again identified me. Captain Fitzallen and Detective-Sergeant Canby also talked, but I listened to none of them. It all seemed such an old story now, and its truth as concerned me was practical, if not actual.

The magistrate addressed one or two questions to me, but I shook my head. I declined to sign the papers they offered me, for to sign my name as Crowsmith would be to render me again ridiculous, and sign "Ragsdale" I would not.

I heard the magistrate say, "I will set down the examination for Friday at two o'clock," and then Captain Fitzallen, who now treated me with the greatest consideration, asked me if I had thought of engaging counsel.

I was about to reply that I did not consider it necessary when I caught sight of something—the only real, tangible thing I had seen since I entered upon this strange world of unreality. It was the florid face and white hair of Rostyn who was forcing his way through the crowd toward the railing. I caught his eye and held my breath while I waited.

"Crowsmith, old man, what must you think?" he said as he grasped my hand.

After this I did not care. I knew who I was, and knew that I should soon be free. I felt faint and dizzy, for I had eaten nothing since my arrest, and I leaned heavily against the railing. I caught only fragments of what followed.

"But, Your Honor," Captain Fitzallen was saying, "this is the very man who sent me word last night that he had seen

and talked to Mr. Crowsmith at the same time that the prisoner was locked up at Headquarters."

"That is true," replied Rostyn, "but early this morning I went to Mr. Crowsmith's room and found him gone, and the bed not slept in. I thought, in view of the note I had received, something strange must have happened, and I came down here to investigate. All I know is that I can swear that is Mr. Crowsmith standing there."

"Your Honor," said the District-Attorney, "this may be some new trick of this dangerous man. The people cannot accept any such absurd identification. Who is this Mr. Rostyn?"

"You vouch for the prisoner being Mr. Crowsmith, Mr. Rostyn; can any one vouch for you?" said the magistrate.

Rostyn looked around the courtroom.

"Yes; I think I see some one," he said smiling.

Manager Hopkins was pressing toward the magistrate's bench, and just behind him came Harry Willey.

Both seized my hands, and while Mr. Hopkins began to explain that he had received my note only an hour ago, Willey interrupted with a question about why I had written that strange letter, begging him to come over to Long Island yesterday. Everything seemed to be in a muddle, and the next thing I heard was the magistrate's voice saying:

"There can be no doubt, Captain Fitzallen, that your men made a blunder. This gentleman has been unmistakably identified as William Crowsmith. The question now is, who was the man in Mr. Crowsmith's room last night?"

No one replied to the question. I looked at Captain Fitzallen's face, and then I began to understand.

Somewhere, it may be in Seattle, Hamburg or Buda Pesth, that demoniac, dynamic force is still at work, and wherever it appears the power of evil triumphant is demonstrated anew. When the story of that strange life is written there can be in it no more wonderful chapter than that which tells how he eluded the entire New York police force after the Blemworth-Dally diamond robbery.

Ragsdale was imprisoned in the city as a lion is imprisoned in a wood which the hunters have surrounded. He might rove to and fro in this forest of brick and marble for a greater or less period, but his ultimate capture was certain. He knew

when not to tempt Fate too far, and he acquiesced in the inevitable—Michael Ragsdale must be taken.

At some time, it may have been months or years before this, he had learned of a rather obscure actor who bore a marvelous resemblance to himself. That man was then marked as his own, to be used in a possible day of need. The day had come, and the man was here. He should act as a vicarious Michael Ragsdale, and be taken in his stead.

He gleaned some particulars of the actor's friends and habits and then the plot was formed. The decoy letter, purporting to be written by a friend in trouble and asking the actor to come with disguises—the letter getting the friend himself out of the way, and the anonymous note warning the police—all were his work. So was the paper containing his portrait—posted to arrive in the nick of time, and which with the wigs and firearms made a nice accumulation of presumptive evidence.

The plan worked like a charm. We moved in accordance with his will like the pieces on a chessboard, and Crowsmith, hastening to the relief of his friend, was caught with the incriminating evidence upon him.

Thus far, however, the plot was one which could have been devised by almost any clever intelligence. Only a Ragsdale could have conceived the act of sublime daring which followed.

It was highly probable that Mr. Crowsmith would be able to prove his identity within an hour after his arrest. Then all the cunning scheming would go for naught. The thing must be clinched, and the news go forth throughout the city and the country that Ragsdale had been caught. Then the detectives would be called off, and the way would be clear for a long run. Mr. Crowsmith would send, naturally, to his manager and his home. The former was difficult to find at this time. The main reliance would be placed on his friends in the house where he lived, and there he must be found.

Accordingly, within forty minutes of the time when Michael Ragsdale was arrested at the ferry, William Crowsmith, attired in the long, light overcoat and soft hat he always wore, walked leisurely up the steps of the "Berkshire." He asked for his key at the desk, and spoke a few words to the clerk on duty. Then he went to his own room, stopping on the way to speak to his particular friend, Rostyn. Mr. Crowsmith had a toothache, and kept his handkerchief pressed to his lips for the

greater part of the time. This was also his reason for retiring early.

When the messenger from Headquarters arrived with a ridiculous forged note Mr. Crowsmith was in bed—apparently.

But sometime in the dead of night Mr. Crowsmith left the room and the house unseen. His pockets were filled with letters and papers by which he could easily prove his identity in case he should be stopped. And since the hour when William Crowsmith vanished into the night Michael Ragsdale has never been seen.

As for me, with the disappearance from the scene of that marvelous personality, I became the central figure in this nine days' wonder. My pictures were in every shop window. People came from miles around to see the man who had been so potent a factor in the escape of the famous criminal, and who bore so startling a resemblance to him. Seats at the theatre were sold out for a month in advance, and when the house reopened—and this is what I owe Michael Ragsdale—I played the part of the Cardinal.



THE CONVERSION OF NICOLA*

BY MARIANNE WITTICH



IN Jaupierre, which takes its name from the sandstone quarries embedded in the sloping sides of a little valley by the Moselle, the dust arose in golden clouds from the yellow highway. In the shade of the whitewashed wall before the roomy inn, squatted the musicians, and upon the broad, smooth road—the only bit of ground left uncultivated by the hard-working people — gay, active girls and roguish-eyed boys were dancing a quadrille, forward and back to the quickest time. There was no calling-off, no confusion; no hesitating, uncertain couple spoiled the dance. It was like watching a well-drilled ballet—intertwining figures, gay, fluttering gowns, and supple bodies, bowing and balancing. And upon them all laughed the glowing October sun, the orchards sent out fragrance, and the fine, yellow dust covered the whole landscape with a glittering veil.

Jaupierre was celebrating, for it was the beginning of the village festival in honor of that good saint who, all the year through, takes such good care of the whole village. In every house work was laid aside. The young people hurried to the dance; the old people looked on, or rested at home from the many cares that come with the wine-making and the fruit-gathering.

The blacksmith's house stood in the midst of the village, but the doors and windows were closed and the anvil was silent, for "the Marshal" had wandered out with his wife and daughter into what was, at that time, the Frenchman's paradise—a bare sunny spot outside the town, with dusty fruit trees and big

*Translated by Grace Cogshall Ford, from the German, for Short Stories.

vegetable beds; this spot the Frenchman loved to call his "garden."

Upon a rickety bench without a back, in front of a wooden hut for the garden tools, sat "Monsieur," and studied "Little Lorraine," with suppressed invectives against the "cursed Prussians"; Madame had enthroned herself upon an overturned oleander tub in the path, and had made fast to the trunk of a young apple tree that netting-work which for some unaccountable reason the women of that province are always doing.

Meanwhile Celestine, the dark-eyed daughter, leaned sulkily against the hedge, and picked to pieces the bunch of asters and mignonette which had been stuck into her pink silk sash for a gala decoration. She started nervously when the priest, reading his breviary as he strolled along, gave her a friendly greeting, after he had inquiringly scanned her face usually so gay.

"Oh, Celeste!" cried the genial priest, nodding to her, "not at the dance? What is the matter?"

"None of your business!" Celestine would have enjoyed saying, but she held her tongue, while her blushing face drooped before the keeper of her conscience.

"Really, you must confide in St. Joseph," continued the priest laughingly; as he courteously declined Father Audebert's invitation to join them; he thanked Madame for the "Mirabelles de Mez," the little sugary plums she had given him, and said good-bye to the good people for the present.

Without stopping he kept on his way, for his sharp, clever eyes had discovered something toward which he eagerly turned.

But this something—a slim, shock-headed lad—at once disappeared behind a beech thicket toward a footpath by the side of the road.

"Hello, Nicola!" called the priest, "why are you slinking through the meadow there, and keeping Celeste waiting? Surely you ought to take her to the dance!"

Nicola looked very much ashamed and slowly turned around; but when the priest, still diligently reading in his book, had passed by and disappeared behind a second clump of bushes as he followed the path onward, the lad stood for a time undecided, lazily stretched himself, finally turned back again.

and slowly as before sauntered along the woodsy path, sweet with thyme, humming this witty and beautiful song :

Had the good God willed,
My name had been Jerome;
But it seemed best to my ma
To call me Nicola—
Nicola, Nicola—ha! ha! ha!
Nicola—

At last he came to the little chapel, gained its sunny side, and, with a sigh, dropped down where soft silvery-gray weeds covered the warm earth.

Yes; he had intended to go after Celestine—at least, he had made her think so the night before, when he lounged around in the bright smithy and watched the flying sparks; but luckily he had not told her so in unmistakable words—trust Nicola always to watch out for that! Promises and obligations are such heavy, heavy burdens! He knew this from many a painful experience. This was why he was called “Lazy Nicola.”

Naturally, the evening before, his half promise had not seemed a burden. He was too fond of pretty Celeste for that. To-day, when he loitered past the inn on his way to get his girl, when he felt the dust and the heat, and saw how the bright drops stood on the dancers’ foreheads, it seemed to him very pleasant to talk with Celeste of a cool autumn evening by the blazing fire, or to sit with her on the vineyard terrace in the sunshine of an October morning; but here, to whirl round and round in the sweat of his brow—he really wasn’t foolish enough for that; and what pleasure could it be to her, anyhow? That her whole body thrilled with impetuous vitality, that her untiring feet ached to dance, and that only too willingly would she have shown her little white-clad person by the side of the handsomest fellow in the village—of all this, lazy, comfort-loving Nicola really had no suspicion.

For Nicola was not only the handsomest lad, but also the richest and best brought-up youngster in the whole neighborhood, and so used to having the ripe fruit fall into his hand that it hardly seemed worth while to stretch it out.

Certainly he didn’t care to make any unnecessary exertion, as in the present case; and so he basked in the sunshine till he fell asleep, and thus got rid of all troublesome thoughts.

Celeste, in the meantime, still stood by the hedge, and thought about the words of the priest, which she knew very

well how to apply. At first she was rather angry. She wrinkled her forehead, and contemptuously turned down the corners of her mouth; then she looked more thoughtful. At last the young girl laughed a little scornfully, murmured something to herself about "stupidity," and declared, turning to her parents, that she would take her godmother some apples. So she filled a basket with the red-cheeked fruit, and slowly walked away. At first she went in the right direction; but suddenly, turning back, she followed a narrow path behind the garden, toward the bush-bordered road leading to the little chapel.

This chapel is dedicated to St. Joseph, whose image adorns the open, cell-like shrine. Over his shoulders hangs a sheepskin, and he leans upon his staff, while from under his weather-beaten halo his face beams forth peacefully.

He may well look friendly, for the devout who turn to him in trouble are almost always pretty young girls.

St. Joseph of Jaupierre is widely renowned. His especial delight is to help young girls get the right husband. He always grants their requests if such requests are consistent with their temporal success and their eternal welfare.

At all events, he never leaves the petitioner in distressing uncertainty as to her fate, but he announces his intentions in the matter by an unmistakable sign. After silently making a wish the girl takes a stone and throws it upon the roof of the little chapel, and if the stone stays there it foretells with unfailing certainty that her request shall be granted; but if the stone rolls off, the saint has a good reason for refusing his help.

For some little time after she had reached the chapel Celeste stood still, glancing now and then at the saint, and thinking scornfully of her lazy lover.

"I won't do it!" she said softly, set her basket down and folded her arms defiantly. "Certainly not——" Here some bright, angry tears rose to her eyes.

But the longer she looked at the saint the friendlier he seemed to smile, until at last mischief shone from every wrinkle of his brightly painted face, as if he'd like to say:

"Don't fool yourself, Celestine, you'd be tickled to death to get him, even if he were ten times lazier!"

"Yes, yes!" at last the young girl whispered, and, as if somebody had forced her down, suddenly she sank upon her knees, raised her hands and prayed from the bottom of her soul:

"Give him to me, dear St. Joseph—oh, do give him to me!" with whatever else her innocent heart prompted.

And such perfect trust came over her that she sprang up with all confidence, laughingly shook the tears from her blushing cheeks, and began to look around for the stone which, it was to be hoped, would prove no disappointment.

But the seekers had already been too numerous. Nowhere around was there a stone fit to throw; and even as far as the hedge the path was as clear of stones as a well-tilled wheat field. The best thing to do was to bring one's stone along.

Celeste wandered a ways up and down the path, but without success. Then her glance fell upon the basket, and with a smile she bent over, picked out the biggest apple, and without stopping to remember the stories past of that fruit, she threw it with all her might upon the chapel roof.

A second she waited with beating heart. Then she breathed more freely, for the apple did not fall back, but rested upon the ridge-pole of the little church. She leaned against the door-post, folded her hands in her lap, and looked up with thankful heart to the saint, who now showed his usual calm and friendly countenance. Little by little she sank into the loveliest day dreams.

Nicola had not enjoyed sweet slumber long. The sun blistered the whitewashed walls of the chapel and burned fiercely down on him, for in this blessed province of the Empire, even so late in the year, the sun is still hot enough to make the grapes sweet, and the drinker hot and thirsty. The sleeper began to be troubled by a bad dream, which presently became a frightful nightmare.

He dreamed that he was sweltering in purgatory, and, like a forge, the fire was only on one side of him, so that on that side he grew perfectly crisp. Piteously he begged a lively little devil who kept stirring up the fire to let him turn round, but the tiny fiend snickered derisively and answered that he must keep quiet, that as he was uncommonly fond of comfort now for 10,000 years he wouldn't need to stir, for there would be plenty of time after that to toast his other side!

But poor Nicola suffered the worst from the thirst which the infernal flames aroused, and sighing sadly looked upward. There he saw above him floating on the clouds the garden of paradise. The angels seemed to be gathering in the harvest, for they shook a magnificent apple tree till the fine fruit rolled

down on all sides. Nicola eagerly watched for some to fall in his neighborhood. He called to the angels to take pity on him, but nobody seemed to notice him. Then among all the blond heads there appeared a dark, roguish face, with Celeste's well-known features. This brunette seraph did not seem blind to the agonies of the sufferer, for just when he believed he should faint away she seized a beautiful red-cheeked apple and threw it down to Nicola, so that it hit his penitent breast a smart rap. Then his rigid limbs relaxed, he sprang up.

Purgatory and paradise vanished, and the bright autumn sun shone over him. But near him, in the green grass, lay the fruit of paradise. As his thirst had remained he seized the apple, bit into it thoughtfully, but eagerly, and devoured it to the very core.

When he had finished that and had thought a little about his dream, with awful clearness he perceived that his vision might come true. Like a crushing burden the idea settled upon his soul, that now he ought to turn over a new leaf, that now he must take hold in earnest, that he, too, must bow before the first law: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread." And the future seemed to stretch out before him like a long, dusty road.

Suddenly he remembered the dark-eyed angel, and with heartfelt longing he thought of the shamefully deserted Celeste, the only person who could scatter flowers along that dreary, toilsome path through life he was determined henceforth to travel.

He sprang up more quickly than he had ever done before, and hurried around the chapel to the path. There he saw the lovely girl sitting dreaming on the threshold. When she heard his step and looked up the new spirit in him shone from his eyes and spoke in the pressure of his hand, as, seizing hers, the young fellow asked eagerly:

"Celeste, at the next village festival will you dance with me as my little wife?"

She answered simply:

"Let us thank St. Joseph."

LADY STALLAND'S DIAMOND*

BY W. E. CULE



HE Bishop of Hexminster is at the present time the most popular prelate in the United Kingdom. His benignity, his sympathy, and his ability to put himself into another's place invariably gain for him the warm regard of his associates, while his kindness and consideration have made him adored by all his servants. He is, in fact, a model gentleman, a perfect bishop.

His popularity has not always been so great. A year or two ago his sympathies were not as warm as they are now. His judgments of other men were more severe; he was apt to be dogmatic on moral points. Yet very few of those who rejoice at the change are aware that it dates from his last visit to the Stallands, and that it is closely connected with the brief but mysterious disappearance of Lady Stalland's diamond.

It was the evening of his arrival, and he stood upon the hearthrug in the drawing-room. A little girl was sitting upon the rug almost at his feet. He had come downstairs after dressing for dinner, to find her the only occupant of the room, and had entered into conversation.

"And what are you doing, my dear?" he asked, after the first questions had been answered.

"I'm playing," said the child seriously.

"That's very nice," was the Bishop's smiling remark. "But what are you playing?"

"I'm playing diamonds. Look at them."

The Bishop looked. In the chubby pink hand extended to him he saw some half-dozen diamond-shaped pieces of glass. He did not examine them.

"They's not weal diamonds," the child went on half-confidentially; "but I'm making believe they are. That's just as good."

*From "Chambers's Journal."

"Indeed?" said the Bishop, with another smile.

"Yes, just as good. Do you ever make believe at all, you'self?"

Again the Bishop smiled. "I—I don't know," he replied kindly. "But I don't think I do."

"Don't you ever make believe you's a piwut? That's what Cousin Bertie mostly does. Or p'waps you like best to be a sleeping beauty, or a king, or a wobber?"

"Well, no; I haven't tried any of those," he replied, with increased amusement.

"Why don't you, then?" said the lady of diamonds persistently. "It's splendid to make believe you's a piwut. I often does it, and I go and get lots of things from ev'wywhere. Piwuts and wobbers do, 'cause Bertie said so."

"That's good fun," said the Bishop. "Do you put the things back afterwards?"

The dark curls shook merrily. "Sometimes I forget," was the whispered answer.

"That's good fun too," declared the Bishop most immorally; and then there was a pause in the conversation.

The "diamonds" glittered brightly under the light from the window as they were tossed carelessly from one little hand to another. Then they were all thrown up together, falling with a soft thud, thud, thud upon the carpet. The pink hands promptly began to collect them, counting and recounting them once and again.

The Bishop watched smilingly. Then his eye fell upon something which lay glittering in the silky hair of a rug near that on which he stood. There was no mistaking the object. It was one of the "diamonds."

It must have rolled to that distance after the last throw. The counting was going on briskly. "One, two, three, four, five, six. One, two three." The curly head was bent low. He moved softly until he was just within reach of the unnoticed prize. It was an impulse of mischief.

"One, two, three, four, five, six!" The Bishop stooped with remarkable celerity and stretched out his hand. He was back in an instant, and had only just resumed his old position when the little face was turned.

"Well," he asked innocently, "are they all there?"

"I'll count again," answered the child. "But I think they's all here. One, two, three, four, five——"

The Bishop actually chuckled. His chuckle was such an audible one that for a moment the counting was suspended, and the counter listened suspiciously. He immediately looked as grave and harmless as possible.

"I beg your pardon, my lord."

It was a footman bearing a lamp. The Bishop moved, and the man placed his burden in a recess. He kept his head bent, but could not entirely conceal his features.

"Martin!" said the Bishop sharply.

The man looked up. There was something of shame in the movement.

"You here?" said the Bishop in a tone of displeased surprise. "You here?"

"Yes, my lord," answered the footman.

The man's face had flushed uncomfortably, and the Bishop had entirely lost his usually benign expression. This Martin was a man who had been dismissed his service three years ago for an act of dishonesty, and such a sudden meeting was decidedly awkward.

"Have you been here long?" he inquired at last.

"Ten months, my lord," answered Martin.

The Bishop's next question was of a more delicate character. He took his eyes from the man's face and allowed them to rest upon the curly locks of the child at his feet. She was still counting steadily—"One, two, three, four, five, six!"

"Does your master—does Sir Edward know?"

Martin shook his head. "No—no, my lord," he stammered. "He does not know."

"Hem!" said the Bishop.

"The truth is, my lord," the man continued eagerly—"the truth is that I—I've turned over a new leaf. Since I left your service there has been nothing—nothing at all wrong."

"Hem!" said the Bishop again; and the child's murmur was heard once more—"Four, five, six—four, five, six!"

"And I hope, my lord," concluded Martin, fear and shame distinct in his voice—"I hope that you will not—that you will not think it necessary to—to——"

He paused and waited anxiously. The Bishop's face had cleared, but it was not exactly pleasant in expression. His friends at that time often regretted that the severity of his views of other men's feelings frequently compelled him to do a gracious deed ungraciously. It was the case now.

"Well, Martin," he said, with visible stiffness, "I am pleased to know that you have changed—that you have turned—and I trust that you will not fall again. Under the circumstances, of course, I shall not mention the past. Do your best to deserve my confidence. That will do now—that will do."

"Thank you, my lord," said the footman humbly; and he silently left the room.

For the time the Bishop forgot his companion in pleasant contemplation of his own leniency. He was awakened by a sudden question:

"Is Martin a wobber, too? I never thought he was."

"My child!" cried the Bishop. "My dear child!"

"Well, that's nothing," said the child, rising and looking directly into his face. "That's nothing. Ev'wybody goes and plays wobber sometimes—ev'wybody!"

The Bishop was startled by this shocking pronouncement, and not a little dismayed by the language in which it was uttered. The encounter with Martin had quite driven from his mind all thought of what had occurred previously, so that the child's meaning was lost to him, and he took no heed of the peculiar look of intelligence in her dancing eyes; and at that moment a rustling of skirts on the stairs, mingled with a murmur of voices, interrupted their conversation. The little one gathered her belongings hastily together and ran out through the conservatory. He smiled at her abrupt departure, and prepared to welcome the first-comer in that easy manner which was one of the most familiar of his many personal gifts.

During dinner he sat next to his hostess, Lady Stalland. On his other side was Mrs. Digby, an elderly lady who had secretly begged for the place because "the dear Bishop's conversation was so improving." Lady Stalland was quiet and charming, but Mrs. Digby was neither, for she raked up every debatable question she could think of, in order to obtain, for future quotation, the Bishop's opinion upon it. One of her questions bore upon a notorious case of "misappropriation" in the morning papers.

"It is a shocking affair," said Mrs. Digby, with unction. "Don't you think so?"

"Very shocking," answered the Bishop, without hesitation. "Very shocking, indeed!"

Lady Stalland took up the matter on the other side. She was inclined to reserve judgment.

"I do not know," she said mildly. "I think—I think we should wait to know all the circumstances. It may not be as bad as it seems."

"Oh," cried Mrs. Digby, greatly fortified by the Bishop's opinion, "I think the dear Bishop is quite right. He—the man—was using and keeping what did not belong to him. That is theft."

She glanced at the Bishop for support.

"Yes," he said, in that dogmatic manner which was so soon to disappear entirely. "Yes, I think so, Mrs. Digby. Circumstances must not be pleaded in excuse. We must face these facts firmly. That is theft."

So the Bishop settled the question, and Lady Stalland could say no more. It was then that Sir Edward addressed her from the other side.

"My dear," he said quietly, "what is wrong with your bracelet?"

Lady Stalland glanced at her arm. Her face paled, and a startled look came into her eyes.

The bracelet she wore was a heavy one of chased gold, and formed the setting for a remarkably large and beautiful diamond. But now the diamond was gone, and the socket in which it had rested was ugly in its emptiness.

"It must have fallen out," said Sir Edward.

Lady Stalland instinctively pushed back her chair and shook the folds of her dress. The conversation at the foot of the table ceased for no apparent reason, and a silence fell. In a moment the loss was known to all, and the silence was broken by a chorus of suggestions.

"It may have been left upstairs," said one voice questioningly.

Lady Stalland tried to recollect. "No," she said. "It could not have fallen there, or I should have heard it. And I did not remove the bracelet while dressing. And, now I remember, I thought I heard something fall while I was sitting in the drawing-room this afternoon."

"Ah!" cried Sir Edward, "then it must be there now."

"Yes," answered his wife. "And I know exactly where it happened. I will go and look myself."

She rose, smiling, and left the table. In the few minutes of her absence conversation flowed on in the new channel.

"Such a lovely stone," whispered Mrs. Digby to the Bishop.

"Sir Edward brought it from India. It was part of the plunder of Delhi, and is valued at——"

"How much?" inquired the Bishop in surprise.

"Ten thousand pounds," repeated Mrs. Digby a little more distinctly.

"Dear me!" the Bishop murmured. "Dear me! It was not large, either, if I recollect."

The lady smiled. "Large for a diamond," she said almost reprovingly. "But what is that footman looking at?"

The Bishop raised his eyes, and found that Martin, from behind a chair at the other side of the table, was gazing at him in a strange and peculiar manner. The look was averted instantly, and before he could even express his surprise at the incident Lady Stalland had returned.

There were signs of agitation in the very rustle of her skirts. Sir Edward's look was a question quickly answered.

"I have not found it," she reported nervously. "It is not where I thought; and I have searched the whole floor."

Again a silence fell—a silence of constraint and discomfort. The baronet, however, affected to treat the matter lightly, though his face belied his words.

"It cannot be lost," he said with quickness. "There is no need for fear—no need at all. Let us go on in peace. We shall find it afterwards."

Lady Stalland sat down and the dinner proceeded. Gradually the restraint passed away, though the conversation entirely failed to leave the channel into which it had been so suddenly thrown. It passed through many stories of mysterious disappearances and equally mysterious recoveries, returning at last to the present case.

"It has slipped into some unsuspected corner probably," suggested Commander Digby. "The danger is that it may have been, or may be, picked up by some one utterly ignorant of its nature and value."

"Both facts will soon be known," answered Sir Edward abruptly; "even if they are not known already. But I believe that every member of the household does know them."

A hard, clear voice from the foot of the table, where Mr. Dallis, an eminent member of the bar, had been quietly attending to the duties before him.

"In that case," he said, "we need not be troubled. Ignor-

ance here would be a serious danger ; knowledge is the best security. The stone is certain to return."

The Bishop was the next to speak. "By the way," he remarked thoughtfully, "I believe I was the first to come downstairs this evening."

"Very suspicious fact," interrupted Mr. Dallis gravely. "A very suspicious fact."

"And I certainly did not see anything of the diamond," concluded the Bishop smiling. "Therefore I must plead 'Not guilty!'"

During the laughter which followed, the Bishop of Hexminster happened once more to catch sight of a face whose expression startled him considerably. It was Martin's face again, and the man's look was one of horror, amazement and fear—the look of a person who can scarcely credit his own hearing, yet is dismayed beyond measure by what he has heard.

The smile died away from the Bishop's face as a dreadful suspicion occurred to him. He was not good at reading expressions, but he could not be mistaken this time. He took no further part in the talk, and there was portentous gravity in his countenance when the gentlemen left their wine to join the ladies in an anxious search for the still-missing diamond.

It was Martin who stood at the door as they passed out. The Bishop gazed into the man's face searchingly, seriously, full of suspicion, yet full of doubt. Then he spoke in a low tone :

"Follow me to the library."

The library, as the Bishop had expected, was empty. Martin followed him almost at once, closed the door and stood waiting.

It was then that his lordship saw the full difficulty of his task. His suspicions, after all, were not certainties, and he was on delicate ground. He decided to speak delicately.

"I wish to say a word about this diamond," he began, after a long and uncomfortable pause—"the diamond which Lady Stalland has lost."

Martin inclined his head. In the fading light his face was perfectly inscrutable.

"We may feel sure," continued the Bishop—"we may feel sure that no one would take this stone deliberately and with full consideration of his action. Temptation is sometimes too strong for the best intentions ; it is yielded to in a moment of

sudden madness. The action is repented of as soon as it has been committed. Do you understand me?"

"I—I think so, my lord," answered the footman in a husky voice.

"I trust that no person would be disposed to treat such a fall with too great severity," the Bishop went on, choosing his words with painful consideration; "but—but the duty of the culprit is clear. He will at once restore the lost article to its owner in the way which seems best to him, and he will leave the scene of his temptation forever. You follow me, Martin?"

"Yes—oh, yes, my lord," answered the man again; and his voice was more husky than before.

The Bishop felt greatly relieved. True, the footman had not acknowledged his guilt, but he evidently understood. He would treat him very mercifully.

"That is well," he said; "that is well. And I think I may say—I feel sure—that if this is done not a word shall be said. The matter will go no further."

"It will go no further, my lord," said Martin. "You have been so kind in the past that I am sure the matter will go no further."

The man's voice was broken and unsteady. The library had grown darker during their conversation, and his face was turned aside, but his words were plain enough for any one. The Bishop gave a slight cough, and concluded:

"Then that will do, Martin. I think we quite understand each other. That will do."

Martin left the room silently. For a while his former master stood alone, thinking of what had passed.

"Perhaps," he mused—"perhaps I have been too easy, too merciful; but, after all, I could not be certain, and dared not make a mistake. If he has it, he must have picked it up just before he came upon me in the drawing-room. Now he will restore it and go away. It is a strange business—a very unpleasant business; but I have done my best to put it right."

He felt so satisfied with his efforts that he heard with great composure, a little later on, that the lost jewel had not yet been found. This intelligence was brought by Sir Edward himself, who entered the library looking much upset.

"Every possible and probable spot has been searched over and over again," he said. "I am afraid that this is not a mere case of accident."

"Indeed?" said the Bishop gravely.

"No; a stone of that size cannot lie long unnoticed. Its very brilliancy would be against that. I am afraid——"

"You are afraid——"

"That this is a very serious matter," said Sir Edward in a lower tone—"a very serious matter. The diamond was dropped in the drawing-room just before we went upstairs to dress for dinner. It must have been picked up after we had gone and before you came down."

"My own conclusion," thought the Bishop; and he nodded with increased gravity.

"Then," continued his host slowly, with the air of one who knows the importance of his decisions—"then the field of inquiry is limited. I quite appreciate the injury which might be caused by a false accusation; but—but I must act at once. Some of my servants are new and untried."

"Hem!" said the Bishop. "I understand—I fully understand."

"But I must not go into this business myself," added Sir Edward. "It shall be given into skilled hands. There is a man on the detective staff at Hazleton who has done well in matters of this kind, and I could have him here by to-morrow. What is your opinion?"

The Bishop gave it his earnest consideration. He felt sure that by to-morrow the stone would be restored and the affair happily concluded; but he could not say so. It would satisfy the somewhat restless and excitable baronet if he were allowed to have his own way.

"There is no harm in it," he decided aloud. "Yes, on the whole, I think your course is a wise one. It is such a delicate matter—in your own household."

Sir Edward moved to the writing-table. "That is exactly the point," he said. "I feel so helpless, and this man will know exactly what to do. I will write at once."

He rang for lights, and then wrote a hurried letter. In five minutes it was finished, sealed and addressed, and given into the hands of a groom, with strict orders that it should be posted immediately.

"Now I feel more easy," declared the master of the house. "He will be here by Sunday evening at the latest; and in the meantime we must keep our eyes open. Let us go into the drawing-room."

The Bishop went, feeling pleasantly conscious that he had laid the train for a satisfactory sequel to this disturbing incident. His very merciful treatment of Martin, too, was an agreeable memory; and he joined the party in the drawing-room with a smiling and benign countenance. The restraint which had naturally fallen upon every one only served to emphasize his good spirits. He told his best stories in his very best manner, and his laugh was as free and hearty as that of Commander Digby himself.

When the hour came for retiring he passed up the great staircase with a light heart. It was his rule to retire early on a Saturday, and he had promised to conduct the service in the village church next morning. He would spend a pleasant, restful night, and would awake in good time to enjoy the first freshness of a summer Sabbath.

His room was on the first landing; but just as he reached the door he was surprised to hear a patter-patter of little feet in the corridor above. A moment later a small figure in white ran to the stair-rail, and an eager face, crowned with a tangle of short curls, looked over at him.

"Wobber!" cried a childish voice in a loud whisper; "wobber!"

The Bishop gazed at the apparition in astonishment. There was mischief in that little face; but he thought there was also a certain amount of awe and admiration. While he wondered two hands seized the white-robed figure from behind, and he caught a glimpse of another face, flushed with annoyance.

"Oh, Miss Connie, for shame!" cried the nurse. "Come back to bed at once."

"It's the wobber," protested Miss Connie, struggling in vain. "I want to see the wobber." And then the figures vanished together, amid subdued exclamations of entreaty and rebuke.

The Bishop entered his room and locked the door. "The ways of children," he said to himself, "are very amusing—very amusing indeed. I wonder what she was thinking of."

He had almost entirely forgotten his previous conversation with Miss Connie, and her words had no clear meaning for him. Like many others among our learned, he was rather absent-minded, and his memory was not to be trusted. He dismissed the matter with a smile, and prepared to disrobe himself in pleasant expectations of quiet slumber.

During this process he became aware that there was something small and hard in one of his vest-pockets. With some curiosity he took it between his finger and thumb and brought it to the light.

For a few moments he gazed at the object in simple wonder, turning it over and over. Then he laid it on the mantleshef, and gazed at it again. The wonder in his face changed to a look of consternation.

The article before him was small, indeed, but its size had nothing to do with the matter. It glittered brightly in the rays of the gas jet—glittered with a purity and brilliancy which even a child could not mistake. He took it up again, and turned it over once more. "This," he muttered, in a tone of sudden conviction—"this is Lady Stalland's diamond!"

Some convictions come as inspirations. This one followed from no train of thought, no mental process; but the mind was immediately satisfied with it. Afterward came an illuminating flash of memory which seemed to make everything clear.

There were Sir Edward's words in the library—that the very brilliancy of the stone must have prevented it from lying long unnoticed. It was quite true—its glitter had attracted his own eye, and he had picked it up as one of the child's toys. If it had been one of her playthings she would have missed it at once.

And during all the searching and commotion the gem had been lying securely in an episcopal pocket. How ridiculous—how absurd! But at all events it was found now, and could be restored in a moment. The Bishop began to put on again the garments he had removed, so that he might run downstairs. But before he had completed this work his face clouded over with dismay. He stopped to think.

In explanation of his further conduct it is only fair to remark here that our Bishop was extremely, nervously sensitive. Criticism of his public work had caused him many sleepless nights, and the slightest breath of blame had the power to give him pain. He suddenly called to mind what had passed during the evening, and saw that he stood in a peculiarly unfortunate position.

At the dinner-table he had expressly denied having seen the diamond. He had looked on at the general distress with sympathetic eyes; he had conversed with his host on the matter, and had even advised him to send for the police. Would any

one believe—could he expect any one to believe—that he had been in possession of the missing article all the while without knowing it? Preposterous!

He might explain that he had forgotten—forgotten that he had found a ten-thousand-pound diamond ten minutes before! He might declare that he had mistaken it for a piece of glass, and they would smile. Who could mistake a stone of that lustre and beauty for anything else? People were so prone to think evil—even of bishops! They would glance at each other in a meaning way; they would rake up remembered cases of sudden temptation and quick repentance—the smirch of suspicion would remain upon his name forever. A dampness broke out upon his brow, and he stared at that wretched diamond in growing horror.

There came a sound of footsteps and voices in the corridor. He started and listened guiltily, with a vague thought of police. Then he knew that the voices were those of his fellow-guests, retiring for the night.

He pulled himself together. In a few minutes his host would come upstairs also. He would wait until he reached the corridor, and then call him in. Sir Edward would understand, and the matter would go no further. He went hastily to the door and waited, listening, with his hand upon the key.

The time went slowly, but at last he heard voices once more. Sir Edward was coming upstairs now, probably with Lady Stalland. In two minutes all would be right again.

But then another dreadful question occurred to him. Would it all be right? Sir Edward was of a suspicious, hasty temperament. Only the Bishop knew that a detective had been sent for, and the master of the house would not fail to recall the fact. It might appear even more curious to him than to any one else. He might think that his talk of police had frightened the culprit into a surrender of his spoil. He might think—Good heavens! he might think almost anything, and with excellent reason, too.

So the Bishop reflected in an agony of doubt and indecision. All his moral strength, his courage, his stability, seemed to have deserted him. He heard Sir Edward's footsteps approach—they reached his door—they were passing. His fingers trembled upon the key, but did not turn it. It was too late!

The footsteps died away; a door was opened and closed at the end of the corridor. That sound came with a shock; it told

him that he had failed—that he had fallen. The chance had gone.

"And I," he groaned—"I am a villain! I—I have stolen the diamond!"

One of the maids at Stalland House had a curious experience on the following morning. She was an old and trusted servant of the family, and it was her duty to attend to the drawing-room. On this occasion she was at work unusually early, having received strict commands from Lady Stalland to keep a careful lookout for the lost diamond, and to allow no other servant to assist her. For this reason she began the ordinary drudgery with a good spirit, and was toiling quietly but thoroughly, when she heard a footstep on the stairs. It was too early, she thought, for guests to be about, and the tread was a peculiarly cautious one, so she paused to listen. The footsteps came slowly nearer, but more cautiously than before; a moment later the door was pushed back, and the Bishop of Hexminster entered the room.

As she afterwards declared in the kitchen, "it gave her quite a turn." "He came quiet-like, as if he didn't want any one to hear him," she said, "and he seemed all upset when he saw me in the room. And his face—why, it was as white as a sheet."

"Had a bad night, perhaps," suggested the cook. "It was very warm."

"He was thinking about his sermon, no doubt," said the second footman. "They say he preaches beautiful."

This idea was considered a good one, and only Martin, who was leaning in grave silence against the dresser, failed to join in the chorus of agreement. The nurse, who had just come down, then contributed her share to the discussion.

"You should see how Miss Connie takes to him," she began. "He must be a good man, or children wouldn't fancy him so. Why, only last night she thought she heard him coming upstairs, and what did she do but slip out of her cot and run to the balusters. And what do you think she called him?"

"Something out of the way, I'll be bound," said the cook. "There never was such a child for queer ideas."

"Well, she calls him 'the wobber.' She will have it that he's 'the wobber.' Such a name for a bishop, isn't it now?"

"'Wobber'? It must be 'robber.' I wonder what she means by that?" asked the cook.

The nurse had opened her lips to reply, when she became

aware that Martin was looking at her with an expression which said, as plainly as possible, "Silence!" No one else noticed it, but the meaning of the look was so clear that the nurse, who was engaged to Martin, and therefore knew him very well, closed her mouth with an almost audible snap, and wondered.

"Talking about robbers," said the housemaid, who had cleaned the drawing-room, "there's my lady's diamond not found yet. Sir Edward will soon be in a nice excitement."

The vagaries of Miss Connie were immediately forgotten, and the new subject warmly taken up. Eventually it was decided that the diamond must be lying all the time in some very safe and simple spot, where it would soon be found. This decision was built upon absolute ignorance of the ways of diamonds in general; but even Martin seemed to support it.

Meanwhile the Bishop was walking in the garden. The night had neither calmed his mind nor restored his courage, for he had failed to sleep. He had, instead, spent the dark hours in feverish reviews of what had occurred; in alternating agonies of fear, self-reproach, doubt and self-abasement. His brow seemed to have several new furrows in it, his eyes had lost their benignity, and his cheeks were unnaturally pale.

After long consideration he had decided upon a craven but simple course—the one he had so carefully suggested to Martin. He had descended the stairs with great caution, intending to deposit the gem in some spot in the drawing-room where it might be found easily, yet not too easily. It had given him a serious shock to find the room occupied, and he had retreated from the vicinity with guilty haste. He was already suffering all the tremors of the repentent, faint-hearted criminal.

Now, in the garden, the fresh air cheered him a little. Surely this difficulty must soon be at an end. Of course it must. Why, the diamond could be placed almost anywhere, and almost any one would find it. That would be a much easier, much better way of setting things right than if he went to Stalland with his story—such a cock-and-bull story as it seemed, too. For a moment he thought of dropping it in the centre of the path, where the gardener should find it when he came; but reflection forbade. The man might tread it under foot; he might prove to be as ignorant of diamonds as a bishop, mistake it for a piece of glass, and throw it away. Besides, even if it were found there and restored, would not questions

arise as to how it came to the garden at all? He walked on, pondering and weighing the possibilities.

Some time later he returned to the house, and, to his relief, found the drawing-room empty. Standing on the hearthrug in his old place, he carefully surveyed the scene of operations. Here was his chance.

The rugs would not do, for, of course, they had been thoroughly shaken and searched, as well as the chairs and cushions. At last, however, he decided to place his unhappy find near the hearth, under the shadow of the great fender. During the day it would surely be found. Why, he might even find it himself. Then he shuddered at his own growing duplicity.

He took the jewel from its place and stooped down by the fender. His hand was extended—the thing was almost done—when——

"Ah!" said a voice, "that diamond, is it?"

The Bishop gasped and stood erect. Sir Edward Stalland had entered unnoticed.

"I am afraid it's of no use looking there," he added, shaking his head. "It is very kind of you to take such an interest, all the same. The thing's stolen without a doubt."

The Bishop recovered his presence of mind. He had unconsciously "palmed" the diamond at the first alarm, and felt amazed to find himself so expert a thief. But Sir Edward had seen nothing.

"Yes," he answered lamely, burning his boats behind him as he spoke. "Yes; it is undoubtedly stolen."

There was no going back, no explaining, after that. Nor did he get another opportunity of being alone in the room, for Commander Digby came in just then, and did not go out again until breakfast was announced. Then every one seemed to be lingering about in the way, and the time passed uselessly until he was obliged to prepare for the walk to church.

The numbers who had gathered to hear the Bishop preach that morning were not entirely satisfied with the result. It was undoubtedly a good sermon, as a Bishop's must always be; but there was something lacking. There was a curious hesitation, a want of force and vigor. The clear voice was not so clear as usual; the sentences did not come so freely; the speaker was absent and constrained in manner. Then it was whispered that his lordship was unwell, a suggestion to which his troubled face

gave full authority, and the general surprise was changed into general sympathy.

The guests from the house walked back across the fields in groups; but the Bishop did not take part in the easy talk that prevailed. He walked alone, deep in his own unhappy musings, until some one joined him uninvited.

"Wobber," said a friendly voice, "it's only me."

The Bishop looked down into the sunny face of Miss Connie. He was considerably startled by the form of address.

"I think you're getting tired of being a wobber," she went on, laughingly. "Isn't you."

He sighed heavily. His knowledge of children was small, and he lived under the mistaken impression that their words were not intended for the serious notice of older folk. This child was evidently still thinking of their idle talk on the previous evening. He suddenly remembered it.

Following up the same train of thought, she continued, half in persuasion now:

"When you're tired you can give up the game. Will you give it up now?"

"What game, my dear?" inquired the Bishop in all innocence.

"The wobber-game," was the simple answer. "You can give back the diamond you wobbled."

That was a blow indeed. The Bishop almost gave a cry, and the child uttered a tiny scream. In his sudden agitation he had pressed her little hand with painful force.

With the blow came a revelation—a quick and complete understanding. She had seen him pick up the diamond; she was aware that he had it. Her form of address had been anything but meaningless, after all.

In a husky voice he asked for further light. Her clear, questioning gaze was positively painful.

"Have you told any one else, my dear? Does anybody know?"

The answer was prompt and reassuring. "Nobody knows. I never tells till afterward."

The robber tried to comprehend the last enigmatical sentence, but it was too great a task for his bewildered mind. His accuser explained it herself.

"'Tisn't fair to tell before the end of the game. Is it, wobber?"

The game? At first this seemed a singularly cold-blooded way of speaking, but clearer recollection made it plain. This little one, her life full of happy "make-believes," supposed that he was really playing at "robbers," and that his capture of the diamond was part of the game. He saw a gleam of hope. If the child's lips could be sealed for a while things would surely right themselves. Afterward no one would heed her talk, and the danger would be past.

"You won't tell," he said gently, and with a hypocritical smile. "You won't tell anybody until—until to-morrow night. Promise!"

"I won't tell anybody until to-morrow night, wobber," was the ready reply. "Not until to-morrow night."

"Then," said the Bishop to himself, "I shall, I hope, be far enough away;" and he actually congratulated himself upon his cleverness!

But the alarms of that day were by no means over. Miss Connie left his side before the house was reached in order to return to her nurse. Some of the party went indoors and others lingered on the lawn. The Bishop went directly to the drawing-room, only to find Commander Digby lazily lounging in the easiest chair. Baffled and vexed, he then made his way to the farthest walks of the garden.

Careless of where he went, he came at last to a small wicket-gate and passed through, only dimly perceiving that he had entered the region of the kitchen-garden. After going some little distance, however, he was disturbed by the sound of voices in conversation.

They came from the other side of a thick privet-hedge. In another moment his footsteps must have been audible, but he paused there, intending to return. Then the first sentences that reached his ears fixed him to the spot as if spell-bound.

"It's the Bishop, Celia. He's got the diamond!"

The voice was that of Martin, the footman. In the silence which followed the eavesdropper heard his own heart-beats.

"You may look surprised," the voice went on in a subdued yet distinct tone, "but it's true enough. I'm telling you, Celia, 'cause of little Miss Connie. She knows that he's got it, and so do I, and so do you now. But nobody else must know, so I want you to stop the little one from letting it out."

Again a silence, during which the Bishop stood as if turned into marble. Then Martin continued:

"It was last night, when I took the lamp into the drawing-room. The Bishop was there, with Miss Connie on the rug in front of him. Just as I got in he noticed something on the floor—something bright and shiny. When Miss Connie wasn't looking, as he thought, he made a dart for that bright, shiny thing, and picked it up. You can guess what it was."

"The diamond!" murmured the other voice in a tone of awe. It was the voice of a woman.

"Yes; the diamond. It was done in a flash, but I saw it plainly. No doubt Miss Connie saw it too, though she didn't pretend to; and that's why she calls him a robber, as you said this morning. You'll have to stop that, Celia. It would be awful if anybody else heard her and noticed."

"But what did he do it for?" was the horrified question. "He—a bishop, too!"

"What did he do it for?" answered Martin, so quietly that the unsuspected listener scarcely heard. "Why, because he was mad—nothing else. He's the honestest man in the world; but when he picked up that diamond he was mad. He was mad at dinner, too, when he told them all that he hadn't seen it; but directly afterwards he saw my eye on him, and came straight to himself. 'Martin,' he says, when they got up, 'come to me in the library,' 'cause he knew then that I had seen everything. And when we got to the library he was as sane as ever. 'It's about Lady Stalland's diamond, Martin,' he says, solemn as a judge. 'You know that nobody would have taken it deliberately, seeing what he was doing. Temptation is sometimes too strong for the best intentions; it comes like a sudden madness.' And then he goes on, 'The person who has taken this diamond,' he says, 'has repented, and will at once restore it to its owner in some way or other, and leave the scene forever. And I am sure, Martin, that no one will say a word about it.' It was awful, Celia, to hear the likes of him begging mercy of the likes of me, and a great lump got into my throat. 'No, my lord,' says I, 'I'm sure of that.' 'Then that will do,' he answers, thankful-like. 'We quite understand each other, Martin—that will do.' And then the interview was over."

"What a dreadful thing!" said the voice of Celia, whom the Bishop rightly supposed to be the nurse. "What a dreadful thing! A real bishop, too!"

Those who have known what it is to be condemned by the distorted evidence of their own words will sympathize with

the Bishop. Martin's easy but earnest story was such a hideously true version of what had taken place that he could scarcely believe his ears. The difference, of course, lay in the point of view from which the story was told; but before he could arrange his scattered recollections the footman began once more:

"Of course, it will be all as right as ninepence by to-morrow. The diamond will be found, and all that, and it won't matter much whatever Miss Connie says. But till it is found, you'll have to see that she says nothing about the Bishop to any one. Why, Celia, I'd rather have stolen the thing myself than let any one think that he did."

There was a brief pause. "I wouldn't, then," said Miss Celia decidedly. "We being engaged, I wouldn't."

A short laugh from Martin was succeeded by a peculiar but unmistakable sound which caused the Bishop to blush even in the midst of his shame and dismay. Then the footman resumed the ordinary use of his lips.

"You don't know, Celia, how good he is, and how well he treated me when I was at the Palace. I only wish I was back there again. Mad he may be sometimes, but the Bible says that learning a lot is apt to make folks mad, and that's the way with him. Other times, I can tell you, he's an out-and-out gentleman. But perhaps we'd better get in now. Lunch will be almost ready."

The last words broke the spell under which the listener had been rooted to his place behind the privet-hedge. While Martin and his companion were taking an affectionate leave of each other he retreated along the path with swift but silent steps, escaped through the wicket into the shrubberies, and sought a garden seat. There he sank down in a state of mind which cannot be described.

"Good heavens!" he murmured after a few moments' deep mental agony. "Good heavens! I wonder what will happen next."

What happened next was a simple consequence of what had gone before; but it was not the less alarming on that account. It took place during the same evening.

The whole day had been unspeakably miserable for the Bishop. Throughout the afternoon he had remained indoors, seeking an opportunity of carrying out his plan. He had lingered in the drawing-room in vain, for Commander Digby

had lingered there, too, with strange and terrifying persistence, only going away at last to give place to others. He had wandered from the drawing-room to the library, from the library to the smoking-room, from the smoking-room to the garden, and back again, like an uneasy spirit. And still the wicked diamond nestled warmly in its place, mocking his efforts and rejoicing in his distress.

He could not throw it away. That would be robbery indeed, and would effectually prevent him from ever putting things right. Commander Digby and the Fates seemed to be all working against his first plan, for every room in the house had some one in it, while the darkest and emptiest corridors appeared, to his guilty conscience, armed with eyes. He surrendered that plan at last, and adopted another.

"I must take the awful thing home with me," he decided feebly. "If necessary, I can explain things to Martin and secure his silence. Then, when I get home, I can write to Stalland and return the stone. I could explain on paper more easily—much more easily; perhaps make a splendid jest of the whole affair. Yes, that will be the best way."

So he descended his Avernus, treading with fatal ease lower slopes than he had ever thought to tread. But half-an-hour afterward it seemed that his plotting and scheming must still be vain.

He was crossing the hall on one of his aimless pilgrimages, when a caller came to the door. Martin had disappeared during the afternoon, and it was the second footman who ushered the stranger in and took his name to Sir Edward in the library.

He was a man of plain, irreproachable appearance; but his rather expressionless face was not improved by a pair of eyes which were small and of a peculiarly hard blue. The Bishop glanced at him in passing, paused, and looked again. The newcomer smiled.

"Fitchett?" exclaimed the Bishop.

"Yes, my lord," answered the caller.

There was a pause. "This is a surprise," said the Bishop. "Are you in this district?"

"Yes, my lord," answered Mr. Fitchett in a lower tone. "I am the head of the detective staff at Hazleton."

Then the Bishop remembered. "Ah," he said unsteadily. "Of course—I had forgotten. Sir Edward sent for you last night."

"Yes, my lord," said the officer meekly.

At that moment the second footman returned. "Sir Edward," he said, "would see the gentleman at once." The Bishop nodded and moved toward the door. Detective Inspector Fitchett, formerly of Hexminster, but now of Hazleton, followed the second footman.

The Bishop crossed the lawn and strolled down the drive with his thoughts in a tumult. He had received another shock, and this had shattered his last plan into ruin.

He did not possess any special gift of prophecy, but he saw as clearly as possible the events which must follow this latest development. The arrival of a police officer, of course, was no surprise, though he had somehow failed to consider it seriously; but that the Fates should have sent this particular man was the greatest calamity that could have occurred, for Mr. Fitchett had been at Hexminster at the time of that unhappy little affair of Martin's. He was known to be a shrewd, astute officer, all eyes and ears, and he must have heard of it. Finding Martin at Stalland House, he would jump in an instant to one natural conclusion. Martin would be watched, arrested on suspicion, charged; he would be forced to tell all he knew in order to clear himself, and then—chaos! The Bishop shuddered.

He took the diamond from its hiding-place, and gazed at it with eyes of loathing and despair. Its value in thousands was nothing to him. How gladly would he have signed a check for the full amount, or for any amount, if by doing so he might have released himself from this painful and dangerous dilemma! How cheerfully would he have hurled the sparkling stone into the mazes of the shrubbery if that would have enabled him to sleep once more in peace! But he must keep it now, though its possession must inevitably bring him to confusion. What a conspiracy of circumstances it was!

Circumstances! He smiled bitterly as he remembered a remark of his own only yesterday at dinner to Mrs. Digby. He had sternly set his foot upon the suggestion that circumstances should be considered in the case of another—yes, another criminal; and the irony of fate had decreed that he should have uttered those foolish words while Lady Stalland's diamond lay snugly in his pocket. How the gods must have laughed at that moment!

He walked on, passing the lodge gates and taking the road

that led away from the village of Stalling. The sun had gone down half an hour before, and the dusk of a summer evening was stealing on. Without him all was peaceful and tranquil; within there was a conflict of fear, self-censure, self-contempt. He went on for an hour, and then, warned by the approaching darkness, retraced his steps.

Instead of going directly up the drive to the house he turned into the shrubbery, intending to take that way as a more pleasant one. By this movement he came suddenly face to face with a person who was lingering among the laurels.

The Bishop was naturally startled by the unexpected appearance. Nor was he relieved to find Mr. Fitchett before him.

"Ah," he said, with assumed carelessness. "Taking the air, I suppose?"

"Yes, my lord," answered the detective, to whom the encounter was equally unwelcome. "It is a beautiful night."

The Bishop made an abrupt yet bold resolve. The germ of the idea had occurred to him during his walk, but it had not taken definite shape. Now it seemed to form itself, and here was the chance to execute it.

"Yes," he assented. "But, by the way, I was just thinking of you, Mr. Fitchett. I should like to have a few words with you."

"Certainly, my lord," said the officer, with great readiness. "I am entirely at your service."

He turned immediately, and they went on together. After a few moments' consideration the Bishop began, in an easy and casual manner:

"What I wish to say is concerned with your business here. Perhaps you are aware, Mr. Fitchett, that Sir Edward Stalland has in his service a man named Martin, who was formerly at the Palace. Probably you have seen him here?"

"I know that there is a man of that name in the house, my lord," answered the inspector, with great caution. "But I have not seen him. Sir Edward furnished me with a list of all the servants."

"Of course," said the Bishop, "of course. But you will recognize this man when you see him. You will also remember, I dare say, that he was discharged from my service for being untrustworthy."

The inspector could not understand such a bland confidence as this. His small blue eyes became harder and more intent,

his face more expressionless than ever. What was it leading to?

"The reason why I mention this," continued the Bishop, "is simple enough. Finding Martin here, and knowing of that past incident, you may be disposed, and very naturally, to regard him with suspicion. Now, I happen to know that since he left my service this man has become a better man. I believe him to be now thoroughly honest, thoroughly reliable."

"Once a thief always a thief," said the inspector, with conviction; but he said it mentally and not orally, while his manner to the Bishop was as humbly courteous as before.

"I have so great confidence in him," his lordship resumed, "that I feel positive of his innocence in this affair of the lost diamond; in fact, I shall have no hesitation whatever in asking him to return to his old place at the Palace."

"Your lordship is very good," Mr. Fitchett murmured admiringly; but his head was bent and his hard eyes almost closed. With him a drooping of the eyelids signified concentration of thought.

"Not at all," said the Bishop, "not at all. But I do not think that a man's single fault should be allowed to pursue him and spoil his life if a word in season can prevent it. There, you have my opinion, Mr. Fitchett, whatever it may be worth."

"Thank you, my lord," said the inspector very smoothly. "It is extremely good of you to take this trouble. Ha! there is some one coming!"

They had paused, standing near a group of laurels at the border of the carriage-road. What Mr. Fitchett had heard was a sound of footsteps on the crisp gravel, and in another moment a man passed by in the dusk. It was Martin.

They were silent until he had disappeared. Mr. Fitchett, who had come into the shrubbery for the simple purpose of getting a quiet view of the footman whenever he should return, then concluded his remark:

"It is very good of you to take the trouble, my lord. I certainly shall not forget what you have said."

"Thank you," said the Bishop, well satisfied. "I think it was my duty to say what I have said. Good-night."

"Good-night, my lord," answered the inspector; and the Bishop went quietly on to the house. He was well pleased with himself once more, and felt a little easier in his mind. Martin was surely safe now for a time at least, and before that

time had expired he would have made everything right. By to-morrow evening he would be at home, writing that letter to Stalland.

The inspector did not follow the Bishop at once. He stood among the laurels for some time, recalling the conversation which had just ended, and trying to discover how it bore upon the case. In about five minutes he had fitted it nicely into the framework of his theories.

"Martin, my friend," he said to himself, "you are a little smarter than I thought. You have managed to get round our good Bishop, and got him to make things easy for you. It was a good idea—a very good one, indeed!"

The inspector's conclusion was a very natural one. On his arrival at Stalland House, Sir Edward had informed him thoroughly as to all the circumstances of the case. In addition to this he had perhaps unconsciously communicated to him his own suspicions, which lay in the direction of Martin. The detective perceived that they were not without reason; and when he had learned that the footman was an old acquaintance with a clouded record, he adopted them without hesitation.

"This Martin," he had asked carelessly, "where did he come from last?"

"From the Countess of Jerbourg's," answered Sir Edward. "We did not inquire as to his previous place."

Mr. Fitchett had made a mental note there. Footmen are apt to boast of their previous situations; but Martin had evidently been silent with regard to his place at Hexminster. A palace is nothing to be ashamed of, either.

"He is not in the house now," Sir Edward continued. "I thought it well that he should not know of your arrival, and therefore sent him out."

The inspector had approved of this movement as a good one, greatly to the baronet's satisfaction. There was, of course, the danger that Martin might find some opportunity of parting with the diamond before he returned, but it was not a serious danger. One would scarcely be likely to dispose of a ten-thousand-pound jewel on a Sunday evening in a quiet country place.

"It's hidden, I expect, somewhere about the house," thought Mr. Fitchett, basing his decision upon a long experience. "At any rate, I must get a look at this man at once. If he's the one I fancy, well, things are likely to get straight very soon."

After clearing up every point which seemed in the slightest degree hazy, he had inquired the probable time of Martin's return, and had decided to get a quiet look at him from the shrubbery as he came in. Then had followed his meeting with the Bishop, and its interesting results.

It was Mr. Fitchett's opinion that clergymen and ministers were among the most gullible of all earth's creatures, and he did not doubt that the Bishop was like the others of his cloth. He regarded him now with a great deal of contempt, a little admiration, a fair amount of pity.

"You are a good man, my lord," he murmured, with a curious smile, as he made his way back to the house buildings—"you are a good man, but you are very soft. As for you, friend Martin, your game is up. You managed the Bishop right enough, but you never thought of Fitchett. Wait until the morning, and you'll see him!"

With these pleasant reflections the inspector amused himself until he had reached a small French window, which had been left open for his use. Five minutes later he was enjoying an excellent cigar in Sir Edward's study, and completing his plans for the morrow.

"Circumstance is the test of a man's quality; his conduct in a crisis the standard of his value."

The Bishop closed the book impatiently. Mr. Dallis looked up from his paper and smiled. They were both sitting on one of the lawn seats.

"What is the matter?" he asked. "Is it very poor?"

"It is absurd," said the Bishop. "Absurd—inane! It is time to restrict this man's output;" and rising hastily, he stepped into the drawing-room to replace the volume upon a table.

Commander Digby, as usual, was there, and looked up as he entered. The Bishop gave him a glance of doubt and questioning, not unmingled with a little curious but pardonable resentment. He remembered that this fellow-guest had checked his plans more than once by his apparent desire to lounge in that corner chair as often and as long as he possibly could. Such conduct seemed utterly thoughtless and unreasonable.

But now the Commander rose, with a little gesture of relief.

"I give it up," he said lazily. "I am afraid that it won't work."

"What do you mean?" asked the Bishop, in natural surprise.

"My little plan, or rather my theory," answered Commander Digby. "It's about that diamond."

"Oh, indeed!"

The Commander proceeded to explain. "I'll tell you how it is," he said; "it's a rather curious case, because you are in it yourself. Do you know, I have an idea that Lady Stalland's diamond was picked up by one of the servants."

"Indeed?" said the Bishop again. He was looking out through the window with no sign of particular interest.

"Yes; ignorance and sudden temptation, you know—just as I suggested at the dinner-table when the loss was discovered. But an idea occurred to me yesterday morning while I was dressing, and it was this: If one of the servants took the stone, she would probably soon regret the theft. As soon as she realized its value, and as soon as the loss was discovered, she would be frightened, and would begin to wish she hadn't touched it. Then her one thought would be—— What do you think?"

"To hide it," suggested the Bishop deceitfully; for he saw what was coming.

"Not at all—not at all. Her one thought would be to return it to the spot from which she had taken it. I am presuming, you observe, that it was one of those silly women. No man would do such a mad thing."

The Bishop nodded agreement.

"As soon as I thought of this," continued the Commander, "I determined to work it out. I came down early yesterday morning—you were down only just before me, if you recollect—almost expecting to find the diamond somewhere on the floor. It was not there, so I concluded that the woman had not yet had a chance to replace it. I calculated, however, that she would hang about the drawing-room until she found her opportunity, and that until she had found it she would look into the room just three times as often as any other person. That would be something after the style of the moth and the candle, you know. Therefore, I resolved to keep a good lookout and watch faces, keeping in the room as much as possible; in fact, I have scarcely left the place for a minute except when I was bound to do so, or when there was some one else here."

"That is true," thought the Bishop. "You haven't."

"You will understand, of course, that I am not qualifying for a thief-catcher," the Commander said apologetically. "I have

been doing this for the simple purpose of testing my little theory. But it hasn't worked out as well as I expected. You'll never guess who has made the largest number of visits to this room since yesterday morning."

The Bishop might have made a very creditable guess. He thought it wiser not to try.

"It is yourself," said the Commander.

"Dear me!" exclaimed the Bishop. "Dear me, how very remarkable!" and he looked suitably startled and impressed. What a deceitful Bishop he had become since Saturday!

"Yes," proceeded Commander Digby, rising from his chair. "You have come into this room exactly twenty-three times since yesterday morning. As for the servants, why, not one of them has acted a bit suspiciously, and it is evident that my theory was weak somewhere. I'll give up detective work after this."

The Bishop smiled. If the Commander's eye had been nearly as keen as his theory, he must have noticed the sickliness of that smile; but he did not notice, and in a moment more had passed out to join Mr. Dallis on the lawn.

The Bishop was glad to see him go, for he was plainly a dangerous man. Standing alone on the hearth-rug, he wondered how many more threads he had yet to come upon in this tangled skein.

It was now Monday morning, and he was looking forward with feverish eagerness to the hour of his departure. As far as he was aware, no fresh movement had yet taken place. Sir Edward had said nothing at breakfast, and Mr. Fitchett was invisible. Things were quiet, and he began to think that they would remain in that state until he could settle them. His letter to-morrow morning would do it.

He had passed another miserable night—a night such as he had often read of, but never experienced before. As the hours had followed one another, his self-scorn had magnified his fault into something quite unlike itself. His old assurance, his self-confidence, had vanished utterly with his self-respect. He had learned that he was nothing better than a contemptibly weak mortal, doing wrong because he dreaded the opinions of his fellow-men. He was not Saturday's Bishop of Hexminster, but some other feeble and unworthy creature who had in a mysterious way found himself in lawn.

So he mused now, standing on the rug where all his trouble

had commenced, and looking vacantly at the bronzes on the mantelpiece. But suddenly his glance fell upon a mirror which reflected the portions of the room behind him, and the region of the door; and he saw that some one was watching him from the doorway.

At first he was naturally startled, but had the presence of mind not to look round. He examined the face of the watcher carefully, and saw that it was the face of a woman—a young woman. Something, partly memory, partly intuition, told him that it was the face of little Miss Connie's nurse.

In another moment he saw more. The expression on the girl's face was not the expression of one who watches as a spy. True, there was a certain furtiveness about it, and she evidently did not intend to be seen; but that was not all. There was a great deal of anxiety in the manner of her gaze, as though she wished, almost as much as she feared, to attract attention; and, above all, there was a look of eager appeal not for a moment to be mistaken.

Still watching, motionless, the Bishop tried to imagine a reason for this curious conduct. She wanted something; that was clear enough. That her want was in some way connected with himself seemed equally clear. She was on very good terms with Martin, as he knew. Ah, yes—Martin!

The Bishop gave a start, as a horrible suggestion came to his mind, and the face vanished abruptly from the doorway. The house, he now noticed, was unusually quiet; but it was a quiet which had in it a hint of impending danger. Where was Sir Edward? Where was Lady Stalland? Where was Fitchett? He reached the door in three strides, just in time to hear light footsteps hastening down one of the farther corridors.

He stood for a minute irresolute. Then the second footman happened to emerge from the dining-room.

"Where is Martin?" asked the Bishop.

"In the library, my lord."

"Who is with him? Is your master there?"

"Yes, my lord; and her ladyship, and the strange gentleman."

"Thank you," said the Bishop; and the second footman, dismissed, went his way, wondering.

The Bishop stood in the hall for several moments longer, and then proceeded to the library. On his way he was obliged

to pass the stairs, and one who was slowly descending greeted his appearance with a cry of recognition :

"Oh, there's my wobber!" .

The Bishop looked up. This time the child's greeting caused him no tremor.

"Wobber!" she cried, "have you seen nursie? I've lost her."

He remembered the face at the drawing-room door. "Yes, my dear," he said. "I think she is down here." And he prepared to pass on.

But there was something still to be said. The child was now on the fourth step, looking full into his face. What she read there, with the marvelous and unreasoning perception of childhood, must have produced her next question :

"Is the game finished, wobber? Is it over? Are you going to give up the diamond you wobbed?"

The question was cruel, heartless, almost triumphant; but the face of the questioner was full of sun and laughter. The Bishop answered mildly, yet speaking with difficulty :

"I think so, my dear—I think so—I fear so."

"In the lib'wy?" asked Connie. "Where papa is? Then I've coming with you." And before he could protest or object she had descended the remaining steps and had taken him by the hand. Half-unwillingly he submitted, and they went on together.

In the library Sir Edward Stalland sat at the writing-table, with his back to the door. At his right stood Lady Stalland, and before him, with the table between, Martin the footman. Inspector Fitchett was also there.

The entrance of the Bishop and his companion took place at a singular point in the proceedings. Sir Edward had just asked a question.

"So you refuse to speak, Martin? You have nothing more to say?"

It was a final question, and Martin had answered it finally :

"Nothing, Sir Edward!"

A pause had followed—a pause curiously suggestive of a deadlock. It was during the pause that the newcomers entered. Their appearance was received by Lady Stalland with a sigh of relief, and Sir Edward evidently shared her emotion. Martin's obstinate features relaxed a little, but the inspector made no sign.

"Oh, my dear Bishop," cried Lady Stalland, "I am glad you have come in! This is a most unhappy affair."

The Bishop inclined his head gravely, and looked at Sir Edward. "Can I do anything?" he asked.

Then the baronet spoke abruptly. "We have been questioning Martin," he said; "you know the circumstances, and you can imagine why we should have done so. We simply ask him whether he has seen anything, or whether he knows anything, of his mistress' diamond. He refuses to answer."

"Either 'Yes' or 'No,'" interposed Fitchett quietly.

"Either 'Yes' or 'No,'" repeated Sir Edward.

There was another long pause. With the exception of the child, who was gazing at her elders in wide-eyed surprise, every one seemed distinctly uncomfortable. Sir Edward and Lady Stalland waited for the Bishop's opinion, and wondered at his sternness and pallor; while Martin hung his head low. But the most troubled of the whole group was probably Inspector Fitchett.

For something was going awry with his plans. When Martin had been called in a few minutes before—when the footman had found himself face to face with this old acquaintance—everything had seemed to be going right enough. The man's amazement, his dismay, his evident guilt and fear, had gladdened the officer's heart with prospects of speedy success. Then Sir Edward had asked the fellow a question, and a check had taken place at once.

He had never expected a refusal to answer. Denial would have been natural, and he had been fully prepared to hear a long tissue of falsehoods and protestations. He had been still more prepared to witness a collapse, a confession, and a pitiful appeal for mercy. But silence might mean anything, and he did not forget that the whole of the evidence was purely circumstantial. He watched the faces and waited, his small blue eyes half-closed.

"Of course," said Sir Edward, "since he refuses to speak, I have only one thing to do. There is no alternative."

The next remark came from the most unlikely quarter. It was spoken in a small voice, full of indignant surprise:

"But Martin isn't a wobber. He isn't a bit of a wobber."

"Ha!" said Inspector Fitchett to himself; "what is this?" Lady Stalland frowned at the child, and Sir Edward turned impatiently. Seeing, however, that she held the Bishop's hand

he said nothing. It was the Bishop who silenced her by a whisper of "Hush!" The others had been surprised at her remark, but he had been alarmed.

He had come to settle this matter himself, and she must not do it for him. In Martin's face he saw that the game was not yet really over—that the man was prepared to keep silence. He would keep silence, at least, until to-morrow, when all would be set to rights. But the Bishop had brushed the thought aside with contempt. He was a man once more.

His emotions of the night had culminated in a sudden revival of his fugitive courage. Face to face with this crisis in affairs, he became himself again. Martin's conduct was a revelation, and the revelation a stimulant. While his weakness had been without hurt to others he had indulged it; had allowed it to lead him into doubtful places, into evasions, shufflings, almost into baseness. Now he saw another man accused in his stead, and it was another matter. So there was something heroic in the way in which he faced the group and prepared to own his error. In spite of his pallor, he had never been so like a Bishop, so like a man.

"I am sorry," he began—"I am sorry that Martin should have been suspected in connection with the loss of the diamond. It is a great mistake."

He paused to allow his words to have their full effect. Inspector Fitchett heard them with growing uneasiness, the others with surprise. Martin looked up in breathless anxiety. But at that critical moment there came a slow tap, tap, tap from the edge of the table where the Bishop stood, and Miss Connie was heard to count in a loud whisper, "One, two, three!"

The Bishop heard, but did not look down. He had more to say, and lost no time.

"I have already told Inspector Fitchett," he said, with a stern glance at the officer, "that I have every confidence in Martin's integrity, despite what occurred a few years ago. I have the very highest reasons for this confidence."

Tap, tap, tap—"Four, five, six!" counted Miss Connie, in quiet disdain of all that was passing. And there the Bishop paused, exactly on the verge of his confession. The others were looking at him no longer—all eyes were upon the child at his side.

He looked down. On the edge of the table were six pieces

of glass. At the same instant she raised her eyes triumphantly—the child who had placed them there.

"You wobbled one of my diamonds," she said; "but I had six all the time. I found one more on the carpet!"

The pallor of the Bishop's face seemed to deepen as the last words were borne in upon his understanding. His lips were parted, and he stared vacantly, first at the articles on the table, then at the countenances of those around him. Mr. Fitchett's eyes were wide open for once, and the word he uttered was short and sharp. Martin's expression was one of astonishment, and so was Lady Stalland's. But Sir Edward, with an exclamation quite as abrupt as the detective's, picked up one of the six glass diamonds and gazed at it fixedly.

There was a brief pause. The object Sir Edward held was smaller than the other five, but it gleamed with tenfold lustre.

"What is it?" gasped the Bishop. "Is it the—is it the——"

"Yes," said Sir Edward quietly; "it is. It is the lost diamond!"

To the Bishop's gaze, the faces around him were hazy at that moment. He gripped the edge of the table to steady himself. His companions began to speak, excitedly, wonderingly; but he did not hear what they said. He was recalling the incidents of Saturday night, the words of the child, the finding of the diamond, and the truth was coming home to him—the real truth this time. Had he been mistaken all along? Had he suffered all those agonies needlessly? Could it be possible?

Slowly he took from its place of concealment the other diamond—the one he had found. With a sickly smile, he laid it down beside the others. It was exactly like them. Then he looked at Miss Connie.

"That's my diamond," she said, nodding in complete understanding. "That's my diamond. You've been a make-believe wobbler ever since Saturday; but now the game is over;" and she gathered up the toys in her chubby hands with every sign of satisfaction and delight.

Yes, the game was over. Again the Bishop smiled. The child's words were quite true. He had been only a make-believe robber after all. But what a terrible game it had been! He had been playing in dead earnest.

Half-an-hour later Inspector Fitchett was being driven away in the dog-cart, muttering sundry opinions as to the "infernal meddlesomeness" of children and the stupidity of their parents.

Sir Edward was telling his guests in the drawing-room how the diamond had at last been found in the very spot where no one had dreamed of looking for it; and Miss Connie was reflecting upon the really excellent way in which a bishop can make-believe to be a robber. The Bishop himself, after a short interview with Lady Stalland, was speaking to Martin in the hall. The incident of the lost diamond was over and done with, and the Bishop was, to all appearance, the Bishop of last week, benign but dignified, affable but stately. Yet this interview and one which followed it indicated that there had been a change.

"Martin," he said kindly as the man came up, "I have been thinking of what you told me on Saturday evening. Your words gave me great pleasure, and I shall be glad to try you once more in my own service."

"Yes, my lord," said Martin humbly. Since he had discovered the injustice of his late suspicions the poor fellow had not dared to look his lordship in the face.

"As it happens," the Bishop continued, "my butler, Gannet, will be leaving at the end of the quarter. If you think you could take his place you may write to me in a day or two. I have mentioned the matter to Lady Stalland already."

And with that the Bishop passed on. Martin stood still, thinking it over, and the more he thought of it the more astonished he became. Why, the butler at the Palace had a house all to himself. A house, of course, meant a wife to keep it; and a wife—— But when his meditations had reached that point he hurried away to find Miss Connie's nurse.

The other interview indicating a change in the Bishop took place at lunch. The story of the diamond had, of course, to be retold, and Sir Edward concluded the tale with an expression of surprise.

"What puzzles me," he said, "is Martin's silence. I can't imagine why he should have refused to answer the question I asked him."

"Ah!" said Commander Digby, "I shouldn't trouble about that. Perhaps the man was hurt, and some people get obstinate when they feel insulted. He felt himself in Fitchett's black books, you know."

The Commander's suggestion was generally considered satisfactory, and the matter dropped. Mrs. Digby, who was again the Bishop's neighbor, then turned to another subject.

"By the way," she began, "you remember the case we were speaking of the other night. That man has been brought before the magistrates."

The Bishop remembered very well. "Indeed?" he said. "What was the result?"

"He reserved his defence," answered Mrs. Digby, "and he hinted that he was the victim of circumstances. Of course, that's all nonsense, as you said on Saturday. Circumstances, indeed!"

It was a minute or more before the Bishop replied. "Hem!" he said slowly, but clearly. "I have been thinking over that remark, and have slightly changed my opinion. If the man pleads circumstances, I shall be inclined to wait a little. Circumstances, you know, my dear Mrs. Digby——"

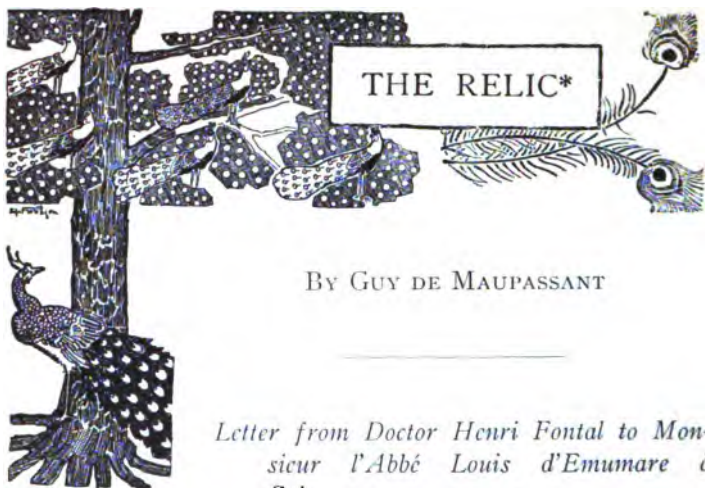
"Yes," murmured the lady as he paused. "Circumstances——"

"Often alter cases," the Bishop concluded calmly.

It seemed a very trite, a very aged remark; yet when he held it up to criticism he saw that he could not have said anything more representative of his own changed, enlightened views. Mrs. Digby subsided into wondering silence, entering the last remark in her mental notebook for future use. How broad-minded the dear Bishop was!

* * * * *

As I have already said in other words, the Bishop of Hex-minster is famous for his sympathy with the faults and failings of his fellow-men, and for his reluctance to judge them hastily. He is always ready to consider the argument of circumstances; but even his most intimate friends cannot guess that this is because circumstances on one occasion made him almost a criminal, and showed him in his own conduct the helplessness and the weakness of even the most upright of men and bishops. His admirers do not know this, and probably will not credit the story when they read it; but the Bishop's own character, in its increased charm and attractiveness, is the best possible evidence of his short and unhappy connection with Lady Stalland's diamond.



Letter from Doctor Henri Fontal to Monsieur l'Abbé Louis d'Emunare à Soissons.

MY DEAR ABBÉ:

Here is my engagement with your cousin broken, in the most exasperating manner, for an unlucky joke that I played, almost involuntarily, on my fiancée. I turn to you, my old comrade, in this my extremity, because you alone can extricate me from my difficulty. I shall be grateful to you till the day of my death.

You know Gilberte, or rather you think you know her; but does one ever know a woman? Their opinions, their beliefs, their ideas, are all unaccountable. Their minds are full of devious wanderings, unexpected conclusions, unreasonable reasonings, wrong logic, prejudices, apparently strong as the laws of the Medes and Persians, but which they abandon if a bird flies against the window.

I need not tell you that your cousin is extremely devout, having been educated by the white (or black, I forget which) Sisters of Notre Dame.

You know all that better than I do; but know also that she is as exaggerated in everything else as she is in religion. Her little head flies away like a leaf whirling in the wind; and she is full of swift angers—swifter relentings. She rushes full gallop toward love or hate, and comes back at the same pace—pretty, as you know; more charming than I can tell you, more bewitching than I intend you shall know.

*Translated by Elise F. Hinman, from the French, for Short Stories.

Well, we were engaged. I adored her, as I do yet—she seemed to love me.

One evening I received a telegram calling me to Cologne for a consultation, to be followed perhaps by a serious and difficult operation. As I had to go the next day I rushed to bid adieu to Gilberte, and to tell her that I would have to dine with my future parents-in-law on Friday instead of Wednesday.

Oh! beware of Friday! I assure you it is a very unlucky day.

When I told her of my departure I saw a tear in her sweet eyes; but when she found I would return so speedily she clapped her hands and cried:

"How nice! You must bring me something—nothing much—a simple remembrance, but chosen specially for me. You must find out what will give me the most pleasure—do you hear? I shall see if you have any imagination!"

She reflected a few seconds, then added: "I forbid you to spend more than twenty francs. I shall be touched by the thought, the consideration, not by the price!"

Then, after another pause, she said in a low voice, her eyes cast down:

"If it costs you nothing in money, if it is very ingenious, very original, I will—I will give you a kiss."

. . . I was in Cologne the following day. I had been sent for on account of a dreadful accident which threw a whole family into mourning and despair. A speedy amputation was necessary. They made me stay in their house, they almost locked me in. I saw only people in tears. I was deafened by groans. My patient almost died under my hands. I stayed two nights by his side, then, seeing a chance for his recovery, I escaped, and started for the railway station. But I was a little early—I had an hour to waste. I wandered along the streets, thinking of my poor patient, when a man accosted me. I knew no German, he knew no French; but at last I understood that he was offering me some relics.

Gilberte's souvenir at once occurred to me. I knew her almost fanatical devotion. Here was just the present for her. I followed the man into a shop and bought a "little piece of a bone of the 11,000 virgins of Cologne." This tempting morsel was enclosed in a very pretty antique silver box, which decided my choice. I put it in my pocket and rushed to catch my train. When I got home I took out my purchase. The

box was open, the relic was lost! I rummaged my pocket, I turned it inside out—the little bone, hardly bigger than a pin-head, had disappeared.

As you know, my dear Abbé, I have only a moderate amount of faith—you have the greatness of soul, the friendship to put up with my lukewarmness, and to leave me free, to await the unknown, as you say. But I am absolutely incredulous about these relics, peddled on the streets, and you share my doubts in that direction. Therefore, the loss of that particle of bone did not trouble me at all. I procured, with very little trouble, a similar fragment, which I placed carefully in my silver box. Then I started for my fiancée. When she saw me she ran toward me, smiling expectantly:

“What have you brought me?”

I pretended I had forgotten it. She did not believe me. I made her beg and implore, and when her curiosity was sufficiently aroused, I gave her the blessed box. She was carried away with joy.

“A relic! oh, a relic!”

And she kissed the box reverently. I was ashamed of my fraud. But she began to show signs of uneasiness. Evidently an awful uncertainty assailed her mind, and looking me straight in the eyes, she said:

“Are you sure that it is genuine?”

“Absolutely certain.”

“But how can that be?”

I was caught! To acknowledge that I had bought that bone of a street peddler would be fatal. What should I do? A wild idea jumped into my mind. I answered, in a low, mysterious voice:

“I stole it—for you!”

She looked at me with her big eyes full of wonder and admiration.

“Oh! you stole it! Where? From the Cathedral—from the tomb of the 11,000 virgins?”

Her heart beat fast—she was faint with happiness. She murmured:

“Oh! you did that for me—tell me all about it!”

It was done, I could not retreat now. I invented a fantastic story, with exact and surprising details. I had given one hundred francs to the guardian of the edifice, so that I could go in alone. The shrine was being repaired; but I happened to

go just as the workmen and the priests went to dinner. Raising a panel I had been able to seize a little bone—oh, so little!—from among a quantity of others. (I said a quantity, thinking of the amount of débris there must be from 11,000 virgin skeletons.) Then I had hied me to a goldsmith and bought a case worthy of the relic. I was not sorry to let her know that the box had cost me five hundred francs. But she hardly noticed that. She listened, trembling with ecstasy, murmuring:

“How I love you!” and threw herself in my arms.

Observe that! For her sake I had committed a sacrilege—I had stolen—I had violated a church and a holy shrine; I had laid violent hands on sacred relics. Yet she was ready to fall at my feet. She found me adorable—perfect, divine! Such is a woman, my dear Abbé—such is every woman!

For two months I was a model fiancé. She had arranged in her room a sort of elaborate shrine, in which reposed that morsel of a rib which had made me commit a crime, as she believed, for her sake. And she worshiped before it, morning and evening. I had begged her to keep it a secret, if she did not wish to see me arrested, condemned and dragged back to Germany to be executed. She kept her promise.

But, early in the summer, a mad desire seized her to behold the scene of my exploit. She besought her father, without telling him the true reason, to take her to Cologne—without my knowledge. I need not tell you that I have never seen the inside of the Cathedral—I don’t even know where the tomb is (is it a tomb?) of the 11,000 virgins. It seems that the sepulchre is wholly inaccessible, alas!

I received, eight days later, ten lines releasing me from my engagement, and an explanatory letter from her father. One glance at the shrine had shown her my treachery and falsehood (and at the same time my real innocence). When she asked the guardian of the relics if any theft had been committed lately the man laughed, and showed her the impossibility of such a deed. But the moment it was proven that I had not broken into a church and plunged my profane hands among sacred and venerable remains, I was no longer worthy of my blonde and exquisite fiancée.

I was forbidden to enter the house. I begged, I implored—nothing could soften the lovely devotée. I was fairly sick with chagrin.

Finally her cousin, Madame de Belleville, sent for me. Behold the conditions of my pardon!

I must get a relic—a true, authentic relic of some virgin martyr, certified by our Holy Father, the Pope.

This completes my state of mind. I will go to Rome, if I must. But I cannot present myself to the Pope and tell him my absurd experience. And then I doubt whether they entrust real relics to private individuals like me.

Could you not recommend me to some cardinal or archbishop, who is the proprietor of the fragments of some saint? You yourself, would you not, have in your collection this precious and sorely needed object? Save me, my dear Abbé, and I swear you shall convert me ten years sooner.

Madame de Belleville, who takes the matter very seriously, said to me:

“If you do not succeed, poor Gilberte will never marry!”

My good fellow, will you leave your sweet cousin to die, the victim of a silly imposture?

I beg of you, do not let there be 11,001 virgins!

Forgive my persistency; but you are my only hope, and I implore you not to fail me.

Yours, in sackcloth and ashes,

HENRI FONTAL.



SAUL OF TARSUS*

BY HENRY HOLCOMB BENNETT



HORNTON—Mr. E. G. Thornton, of the Daily Trumpet, detailed to gather strike news—was angry and unhappy. He was angry because his new brown derby had been smitten from his head, and the side crushed in by a hard-thrown lump of coal. He was unhappy in that he could not get at the thrower to properly reward him. An aged and disreputable tomato had burst upon the shoulder of his light serge coat. This also he had to endure, not in silence, for he swore at the thrower with fluent vigor; but many other men were swearing also, swearing loudly, so that there was no individuality in his own efforts, and to feel that his efforts were wasted on the air was an added injury.

About him railway tracks ran everywhere, and a bewildering confusion of interlacing switches. From the gleaming steel of the rails and from the hard-packed cinders which made the ground between the tracks, the reflected heat of the July noon arose in a sweltering shimmer. Fine dust lodged in the throat and nostrils, and the water in the canteens of the soldiers of the escort was warm and unpleasant. Along the tracks were overturned freight-cars, near which a wrecking-train, with a wheezing engine, stood motionless, the thick smoke from the stack rising lazily, or drifting heavily down beside the train to make worse the choking in the throat. At either side of the space of tracks was a smoke-dried, unpainted, rough board fence, scorched and blackened in spots, where live coals from passing locomotives had kindled creeping fires; beyond the fences, behind and ahead of the wreck train, surged a crowd which filled the parallel side streets, and which was never still.

"If I can catch a reporter I will take him with me," Captain

*Written for Short Stories.

Maurice Brady had declared three hours before. This was the reason why Thornton, of the Trumpet, was with C Company, Twenty-second Infantry, escort and guard to one of the wreck trains, which was endeavoring to straighten out the tangle of wrecked cars along the vast network of tracks which threaded and encircled the city. Captain Brady had caught him, and had bidden him, with great apparent geniality, to "come along and get a good story for your paper." And Thornton, seeing a chance to get a first-class inside account of what promised to be a "good thing," had accompanied him joyfully.

Attached to the wreck train was a passenger coach. The deputy marshals rode in this; a gondola, in which, it was plainly evident, moist clay had been carried recently, was provided for the soldiers of the escort. Thornton had wished to go in the coach, but went on the gondola instead when he heard the second lieutenant say something about a "soft snap." He wanted to know why the soldiers went on the open car, and learned that it was "orders."

Here and there along the way stones and pieces of coal had been thrown at them by a gathering crowd of hooting roughs. Seeing that the officers remained standing instead of sitting down flat in the bottom of the car to avoid the missiles, as most of the men did, Thornton stood likewise. The deputies in the coach were well protected from the flying stones, but they now and then fired ineffective revolvers at the crowd which followed the slowly moving train. The soldiers did not fire, and the sides of the gondola were low. When Thornton asked why "They stood and took it like sheep," he learned that being sheep was also orders.

An obstruction was removed here, a car replaced upon the tracks there, a broken switch repaired elsewhere, and their progress was slow. At a street crossing the train stopped to allow the crew to right an overturned flat car, which had been thrown sidewise across the tracks.

"We'll get out here," said the captain, and the men clambered down from the gondola under a fire of missiles, and stood in line along the train, while the wreckers worked with the car.

The crowd was packed against the low fences on either side; a part of it swept through the street crossing and spread across the tracks in the rear of the train; another part did the same in front at the next crossing. They cursed and jeered, but did

not interfere with the proceedings of the wreck crew further than by the hurling of stones.

Thornton pulled out his notebook to make a memorandum of the street names. Some one in the crowd cast aspersions on his descent, designating him in terms uncomplimentary to his personal appearance, and some one else threw coal at him. At a particularly pungent remark he raised his voice to reply, but the captain laid a remonstrating hand on his shoulder.

"Easy, be easy," said Brady, with a carefully repressed smile, "'tis against orders to reply to anything the mob may be pleased to call us, and you are with us now. We are forbidden to excite or irritate these 'peaceful citizens, watching the operations of the troops out of simple curiosity.'"

Thornton winced. This was a quotation from an article in the *Trumpet* of the day before, concerning the treatment of a mob at the hands of the soldiers and police. It did not sound as well as he thought it did when he wrote it. He remarked that the crowd was a lot of thieves and thugs and ruffians, but Brady said it was just such another crowd as the one "wantonly fired upon by a reckless and undisciplined militia," and that crowd, he reminded Thornton, was composed of "honest workmen and reputable citizens." When he went on to ask Thornton if he did not recognize the "honest workmen" before him, Thornton growled that an honest workman would not "be found dead with such a crowd," and moved down to the other end of the car. He walked back when he saw the foreman of the wrecking crew go up to where the captain was standing. The foreman wanted the crowd cleared away from the rear of the train, where the men were working, and Brady, walking back to the end of the last car, told the mob to "get out of that!" They laughed at him, and called him unsavory names.

"What will you do—shoot?" asked Thornton, as the captain came back. Brady grinned.

"Take your platoon and clear those tracks," he commanded the first lieutenant, without answering Thornton's question. "When you get 'em cleared," he continued, "keep 'em that way."

A platoon of the escort moved out in line and pushed the crowd before it. They held their rifles athwart their bodies, at "arms port," or hammered placidly with the butt at reluctant rioters. A man struggled with a soldier for the posses-

sion of a rifle; a sharp poke from the bayonet of the next-rank man convinced the struggler that he had lost no rifle, and he backed into the mob, swearing. The crowd being pushed back half a dozen soldiers formed a line of wide intervals across the space gained, while the rest returned to their positions by the train. The mob still threw stones and an occasional bottle. One of the guards at the crossing dropped his rifle and clasped his hands to his head. Thornton saw a thin trickle of blood creep down from beneath his fingers, and started forward. Before he could reach him the sentry tied a handkerchief around his head, pulled his slouched hat down over his eyes, picked up his rifle and stood there as before, seemingly oblivious to anything or anybody. Thornton looked at him curiously, then at the rest of the little squad of guards, and then at the main body of the company, leaning on their rifles in the scanty shade of the wreck train, here and there dodging a stone, some of them struck by the flying missiles, but making no reply, no movement of retaliation. A puzzled look came into Thornton's eyes—he walked up to the captain.

"Do you have much of this sort of thing?" he asked. "Are all the crowds as mean as this?"

"This is the regular programme," the captain said, "only this gang has scarcely commenced to be really ugly yet. Ought to have been with us day before yesterday if you wanted to see an ugly mob. Maybe this will get worse, though; shouldn't wonder."

The wrecked car had been righted, and the whistle of the wreck train gave a warning blast.

"What is it now?" Brady asked the foreman.

"I don't know," he answered dubiously.

"Why don't you know? You're supposed to be running this thing. Are we going forward or back? Or will we stay here and be hit with rocks for another half-hour?"

"Go ahead, I guess, if you can get that crowd away from the crossing in front."

"All right; we'll look after the crowd. Tell your enigneer to follow us slowly."

The squad of guards from the rear came in and joined the others. The blue line swung out to the right, then to the left, and halted ahead of the locomotive, stretching from fence to fence. Going to the front the captain commanded the crowd to clear the crossing.

The only answer to his command was a chorus of howls and yells. Every moment fresh accessions swelled the crowd. stones and coal and rough pieces of iron from about the tracks hurtled through the shimmering air. A soldier fell out of the ranks, and another. From a house beyond the fence at the right came the crack of a revolver. One of the file-closers took off his hat and looked curiously at two little holes in the crown. A sharp order snapped down the line, and the motionless figures sprang to instant life and action.

Thornton was busy tying up the head of one of the soldiers who had fallen back. As the order came the private broke from his grasp and ran, bareheaded, after the advancing line. He overtook and pushed his way into the crowding files. Thornton stared after him in amazement. He could see the faces of the officers, running in the rear, as they half turned to yell at the flank men. Perspiration was streaming down their cheeks. The mouth of the captain was opening and shutting, but no sound seemed to be issuing from it. The men ran with hands hard-gripped on their rifles and their bodies swaying forward from their hips. The crowd at the crossing was scornful and defiant.

The interval grew rapidly less. On one side a thousand howled and jeered, with threatening hands and arms upraised; on the other was the blue line, running silently. Almost without conscious volition Thornton followed. The engine, with sudden, panting bursts of steam, like labored breath, began to move slowly. The blue rank was closing with the motley mass before it. Execrations and curses changed to howls of rage and pain. Thornton saw the blue-clad bodies heave forward and the blue arms jerk back and forth with sharp, vicious movements. The gleam of a white chevron caught his eye. He watched it in a fascinated daze, as though there were nothing else. The noise of the engine, close at his elbow, made him glance hastily around. When he turned his eyes to the front again the gleam of the chevron was lost to sight and the whole scene and movement of the struggle flashed upon him in a swiftly vivid impression. The blue line was still pushing forward; the arms still jerked to and fro irregularly. Here and there a rifle swung up over a shoulder and came "butt to the front" as its wielder struck at the mob before him. Against the dark background of the swaying crowd, faces here and there sprang for an instant into pale relief. The line moved

faster. There was a new note in the yells of the mob, and the flanks of it melted away through the gaps in the fences at either side. Thornton began to hear the voices of the officers: "Stead-y! Stead-y! Stead-y!" in a high-pitched, cadenced monotone.

A swift panic seized the mob and it scattered to right and left, from the crossing to the streets, leaving the track clear. The line halted; handkerchiefs came out, mopping hot faces. The private whom Thornton had been assisting came back and asked for his hat. Here and there in the ranks men looked strangely at the points of their bayonets.

"How was that?" the captain asked, as Thornton came up to him.

"I never saw anything like it before."

"No?" grinned the first lieutenant. "I have noticed that the trouble is generally over before you newspaper men get on the ground."

"Well," said Thornton, defensively, "it isn't because we do not want to be there. We can't be everywhere, and how do we know when and where trouble is going to happen? We do the best we can."

"Where do you get your information, then?" asked the lieutenant.

"From some of the people in the vicinity who saw the row."

"Reliable eye-witnesses?" queried the captain.

This was another quotation, and Thornton's hot face grew a little hotter as he recognized it.

"Your point of view is rather from the other side of the fence, isn't it?" and the captain waved his hand toward the crowd in the street.

"Well, yes," said Thornton, slowly.

A shriek from the engine made them look up. The train, which had been switching back and forth, rolled past them and over the crossing—there it stopped.

"What on earth are they stopping for?" the captain asked. "Why don't they go on now that the way is clear?"

Before any one could answer a sudden crash and jeering yells from the rear made them turn sharply.

"Damn 'em," said the foreman, "they've tipped over that flat again."

His right hand described small circles in the air, and the train backed toward them from beyond the crossing. The

whistle gave three short, sharp shrieks, and triumphant yells broke from the crowd as though in answer.

"What's this for?" Brady demanded.

"Going to handle the flat again, of course. Can't let it stay there across the Grand Trunk tracks."

"You'll have to be quick about it, then," the captain said sharply. "I'm not going to keep my men here to be made targets of much longer. There'll be big trouble if we loaf around here. That mob is getting bigger and uglier, and if we are to handle it without firing we've got to have more men. Can't one of your gang slip through the crowd to a telephone somewhere?"

"I reckon so."

"Send him here, then."

A grimy man in a blue jumper came up in response to the hail of the foreman. To him the captain delivered a message, and the grimy man walked slowly toward the crossing and disappeared up the tracks.

In the rear there was trouble. The crowd around the overturned flat refused to move for the men of the wreck crew, and the foreman appealed to the captain. Brady turned to the first lieutenant.

"Got to bring the men back," he said. "Go up and do it, Tommy."

The first lieutenant swore at the foreman for not knowing his own mind, and walked up to where the men stood. They came to attention and swung back over the ground they had just gained. At sight of them the rioters about the flat car fell back. In front the crowd instantly surged across the tracks again.

The guard once more took up its position by the train, or moved here and there at intervals, pushing back the crowd, which, grown to larger proportions, was grown proportionately bolder, more defiant and harder to handle. As fast as it was pushed from one place it swarmed in another. The shower of missiles came more sharply, soldiers were struck every moment, but the men in dusty blue were silent and unreplying.

Thornton was struck in the side by a stone. There were little gaps in the blue line, where men, cut about the face and head, had fallen out and leaned against the train. The deputy marshals, in the passenger coach, who had remained in its safe shelter, began firing at the crowd again, despite the remon-

stances of the captain. Some of the train crew pulled revolvers from their pockets and answered the shots which were coming more and more frequently from the houses which faced the tracks. With a shriek of the whistle the train again moved slowly toward the crossing, but came to a stop before reaching it, and again backed down the track.

With hoots and yells the mob followed it, pressing closer and closer. The captain's warning to disperse before he ordered his men to fire was answered by louder howls and defiant assertions that he dare not shoot. He looked up the tracks in the direction in which the grimy man in the blue jumper had gone; then he climbed upon the gondola to look beyond the crowd. With a shake of the head he jumped down, disregarding the stones which spanged about him against the car.

"Why don't you shoot?" asked Thornton, nervously, aware of a swiftly growing threat in the attitude of the mob.

The captain shook his head without answering and turned away. Thornton looked at the guard. More gaps were in the line, but the men stood there as tensely indifferent as before. He followed the captain along the train. The foreman came up with a frightened face.

"We can't do nothing," he said. "The crowd's too much for us. Did you send for more soldiers?"

"Yes; they ought to be here, if the message reached them. That man of yours got back?"

"No."

"Then we don't know whether he got to a telephone or not. Well, I'll wait a little longer on the chance of reinforcements, but if they do not come we'll have to get out of here the best way we can."

The apparent irresolution of the wrecking crew encouraged the mob to bolder action. It closed up on the train and a bayonet charge produced but a momentary effect, for those who fell away in one place came up in another. The scattering shots grew to a fusillade; the wreck crew gave up the struggle and climbed on board the train, an action hailed with shouts of fierce triumph by the rioters. Before and behind the train switches had been thrown so that its course in either direction was cut off. Revolvers were leveled at the engineer and fireman. Uglier and fiercer grew the yells of the crowd. Men with hate-drawn faces and brandished weapons threatened the lives of troops and train crew.

At a low command the guard swung out to face the mob on three sides—on the fourth was the train.

The captain clambered up the side of the gondola once more. When he jumped to the ground his face was white and set. He walked to the front of the train and held up his hand. Those of the crowd who saw the gesture ceased their shouts for a moment.

"I will give you three minutes to disperse," he said firmly, pulling out his watch as he spoke. "At the end of that time I shall order my men to fire."

He walked half-way back to the lines, his watch still in his hands.

"One minute!" he cried.

"Two minutes!"

The mob shouted threats and curses and derisive epithets. A stone struck him on the shoulder. The second lieutenant staggered blindly back against a car, with the blood running from a long, ragged gash across his forehead. On the ground a private lay outstretched, another bent above him, canteen in hand.

Thornton saw it all as in a picture, a scene in a drama—the lieutenant's bloody face, the man on the ground; others, here and there, with rough bandages about their heads; the scowling threat in the faces of the mob; the motionless figure of the captain, facing the crowd, watch in hand—it seemed unreal. He saw the captain shut his watch and walk back to the waiting ranks.

"Load!"

The sharp command shattered the haze of unreality.

"At will, begin firing!"

Dropping shots ran swiftly along the ranks, with a ragged crackle of spiteful sound. Here, a man aimed deliberately; there, another tugged feverishly at his cartridge-box, jerked his rifle to his shoulder, and fired blindly, reloading in mad haste. The officers stood within the square, their drawn swords in their hands.

In the front of the mob a man wheeled sharply to face the crowd. His hands were thrown up as though commanding silence. He wavered slightly as he stood, and fell backward, as a stick falls, swiftly, and lay outstretched, with blind eyes gazing at the sun. Another slid to the ground, slowly, sinking gradually, and turned upon his side. The ugly red of blood fol-

lowed a shivering gasp, and he lay quite still, in a little, huddled heap. In another place one who fell was upborne by a man behind him, and dragged backward into the crowd. A fourth caught the top of the fence with groping hands, and hung there for a moment; then his grasp gave way and he fell, with his head bent forward against the boards.

Before the angry rifles of the guard a gray-blue wall had grown, slowly rising and spreading out upon the sluggish air. A whistle rang high above the thud-thud of the musketry; the orange flashes ceased, the firing dropped to silence.

The mob was shouting yet, but the shouting was terror-stricken. Men with frightened faces pushed their way through the crowd. The action grew contagious. More and more they dropped away. Wounded men staggered toward the houses, alone, or upheld by others. The crossings were swiftly cleared. A man of the train crew ran back and threw a switch, signaling to the engineer. The foreman came to the captain hastily, and the guard clambered back into the gondola. The engine wheezed and puffed, and the train moved backward. A curve hid the rags and fragments of the mob from sight, and Thornton drew a long breath.

He looked about the car. Men with awkwardly adjusted bandages sat upon the floor or leaned against the sides. Here and there a red stain showed. The second lieutenant tried to wipe the blood from his eyes. A man lay flat, his head upon another's knee.

There came a gleam of white tents beyond the tracks and the train slowed to a stop. The captain came to where Thornton climbed over the side of the car.

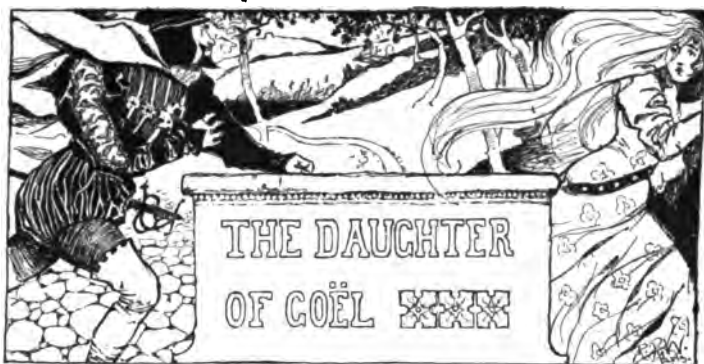
"Well," he said, "did you get your story?"

"Yes," said Thornton, "and something else."

"What's that?"

Thornton stopped as he clambered down and looked into the face of the captain.

"Some changed ideas," he said, slowly.



BY CHARLES FOLEY

IN descending the path, Jean Fait Tout pointed out to me, toward the shore, a ruin, gray and dismantled, but still menacing. "Behold the tower of Duard," he said; "and I am going to relate to you, just as I promised, the story of the daughter of Goël. Recall, on your side, the barbarous, atrocious custom our lords had of preserving their walls from all destruction by burying in them, alive, a young maiden still a virgin.

"Sir Rohald, mysteriously, had not allowed any but laborers from beyond the sea to work on that tower, although old Goël, the best mason of the country, dwelt in a hut very near by.

"But Goël had a daughter, Phanette, as delicate, pretty, lively and graceful as a doe, whom Sir Rohald, a base scoundrel, pursued in the meadow, on the beach, behind the hedges, everywhere.

"The poor little one, thanks to her agility, escaped from the lord, but by a miracle; and after the chase, fell on the paternal threshold, trembling and breathless, like a hind at bay.

"Upon which Goël, although only a vassal, carried his grievances before the Duke of Bretagne. Sir Rohald was threatened with excommunication if he did not amend. The lord ceased, then, to torment Phanette, but he cherished

*Translated by Irene Alvarez, from the French, for Short Stories.
Illustrations by Reginald P. Ward.

a furious rancor against the mason ; not only did he no longer employ him at his works, but he forbade everyone to give him employment.

"One evening, a short time after that, the English masons, having finished the tower, had crossed the sea again. Goël and his wife awaited beside the cold hearth the return of Phanette, who had gone to the village to sell their last clothes.

"They watched by the light of a smoky lamp, which burned before the image of St. Cado. Both were absorbed in their sad thoughts, when some one knocked at the door. Two strangers appeared. With some mystery, they asked if Goël



would consent to accompany them to a few miles from the village, and if he would be able to build a wall with his eyes bandaged. At the same time, they placed a purse full of gold on the table. The offer did not surprise Goël, because the lords of those times contrived a thousand hiding places, pits, niches and secret caves, wherein to put their riches in safety. Nevertheless he hesitated, imagining foolishly that without their full beards and turned down hats, he could perhaps recognize, in these two strangers, valets or cavaliers of Sir Rohald. But his wife, already putting the purse in the trunk, exclaimed :

"Go, my man, and return quickly. Phanette will then

have come home, and we will all three make a reckoning of our fortune, forming a thousand fine projects for the future.'

"That decided Goël. Hardly was he outside, when the two strangers fastened the bandage firmly over his eyes and made him swear, in the name of St. Cado and under menace of death, that he would not remove it himself, whatever might be the strange things that he might hear.

"A superfluous oath, because the broad bandage not only closed his eyes, but also his ears.

"Each of the men then took one of his hands and led him along. By the wind which blew on the nape of his neck, Goël understood that they went away from the shore to enter the valley; but after a hundred turns and windings, which



fatigued him and made him lose his bearings, he felt the wind strike him in the face. By that and certain vague indefinable sensations it seemed to him that he was led again towards the village.

"After a new course, the blowing of the wind ceased abruptly, and he felt himself no longer walking on the ground, but on stones; then he stumbled and had to climb steps. Without moving his lips, he counted twenty-seven. After this, his two guides made him touch, on the right, some cut stones and on the left his trowel and mortar; and, in front of him, a very low wall that it was necessary to build up, until the hiding place in it was covered. Having his hands free and not feeling

any one near him, Goël set himself to work, putting the stones one over the other in just apposition, plastering the interstices, cementing them in such an active and expert fashion that the wall rose quickly. He imagined at first that some one, with a poignard raised over his breast, watched him, awaiting the least movement he made to remove the bandage which rendered him blind and deaf.

"But soon, in that profound silence, his thoughts grew calmer and he arrived at the conclusion that he worked all alone in a dark parlor. In his freer movements, he could, by furtive touches, notice that the niche that he was closing up grew narrower above into a pointed arch. It could have held a statue of natural size and it resembled no other hiding place of treasure. This reflection gave him the desire to stretch out his arm to touch the gold or the jewels of inestimable value. In spite of his danger, he advanced a hand and drew it back quickly, amazed at feeling the texture of cloth instead of the cold contact of gold. Were these, then, precious garments that he was hiding? Impunity emboldened him and a little while after, he advanced the hand further and touched something like the falling folds of a dress, still warm, as if it had only just been removed. Goël, although more anxious, did not stop working. The wall already was at the height of his waist, when a drop of water, oozing, doubtlessly, from the wall, fell upon his hand. The little drop was not cold, as it ought to be from water filtered through granite, but warm—almost burning. Instinctively and slyly Goël carried this drop of water to his lips and found it as bitter as a tear. Then other drops fell more abundantly, more burning on his fevered fingers. He was more and more troubled and yet the wall rose, rose incessantly.

"At one time, under the stuff that he touched, he thought he felt a living warmth, a warmth of flesh, and in the frightful silence imagined he heard before him, at the height of his heart, another heart beating in a desperate fashion. His whole body shuddered, a cold perspiration trickled from his forehead, and nevertheless, faithful to his oath, he placed a large stone against this living thing, which beat like a heart, cemented it and then put others over it.

"Then the little hot drops ceased to fall and he reached the pointed arch at last, when his trowel and fingers became entangled with some light threads, which broke as easily as deli-

cate strands of silk. Adroitly, quickly, Goël rolled a few of these threads around one of his fingers and finished cementing the surface of the arch and of the wall. Then worn out with fatigue and emotion, he dropped his tools and, by an old habit, mechanically passed his hand flatly over the stones, yet moist and fresh, in order to reassure himself that they were united and smooth. But at the height of his own breast he felt under his palm, through the thickness of the wall, the same warmth of life, the same wild and terrible beating of a heart in agony. This time the impression was so vivid, so real, that overcome by his feelings, Goël uttered a moan of distress and fell backwards. He did not come to himself until long afterward, aroused by the strong breeze blowing from the sea. His first movement was to tear off the bandage. He found himself lying on the pebbles of the deserted shore, late in the night. From a great distance away, by its narrow loophole lighted in red, the tower of Duard seemed to watch him, darting its eye of blood upon him across the mist. Staggering still and haunted by a nightmare, Goël regained his hut. On seeing him enter, his wife, who still watched by the light of her smoky lamp, gave a cry of joy.

"But he let himself fall on a bench, moaning :

" 'Phanette! Where is Phanette?'

"His wife, very pale, had to confess that Phanette had not yet returned. At twilight some of Sir Rohald's men had been seen prowling in the meadows of Joburg. The terrified shepherds, hearing a desperate cry from the valley below, which was already quite in darkness, had peered over the top of the rocks, but had seen nothing. Goël asked, in a voice trembling with anxiety :

" 'Wife, do you know the number of steps one has to climb to reach the door of the tower of Duard?'

" 'One counts twenty-seven steps,' answered his wife.

"Goël, in anguish, joined his trembling hands, and in des-



peration raised them toward the image of St. Cado, which the little smoky lamp lighted.

"On her side the woman uttered a cry:

" 'Oh, Goël, Goël! what do I see twined around your finger and shining like gold? One would say they were hairs from the head of our Phanette!'

"Then Goël, sinking against the table, his head in his arms, sobbed:

" 'Misfortune has come upon us, O wife! I have buried our child alive in the granite tower!'





BY ARTHUR A. LODGE

“DO you know, Lydia,” said Jimmy Hackerston, in that unemotional way of his which she fancied she so disliked—“do you know, I’ve a theory that one’s mind can be trained to almost anything. Now, for instance, you say you don’t love me. Well—possibly not. But when you hint you could never learn to love me, I think you underrate your capabilities. Why, with half an hour, or say an hour a day, of steady practice, you would accomplish wonders.”

He looked at her calmly, and thrummed an inaudible tune upon his tennis racket. Lydia smiled disdainfully.

“Perhaps,” she said. “But there is a point which you quite overlook; I have no desire to learn.”

“Oh, but think how much better it would be. You see, we are a good deal in each other’s company——”

“We certainly are,” said Lydia. Jimmy held up a warning hand for silence.

“A good deal in each other’s company, and when you had thoroughly acquired the art of loving me, my companionship, instead of boring you, would prove a constant source of pleasure. And you would be surprised that you could have existed so long in blissful ignorance.”

“You are talking absolute nonsense,” said Lydia, and she looked around the large garden, unoccupied save for their own presence and that of a distant gardener.

*From “Crampton’s Magazine.”

"Theories," said the imperturbable Jimmy, "are frequently called nonsense until they are proved."

"Well, I don't propose to prove this theory," said Lydia.

"Why?"

"Oh, because—because you are such a bore. You are so—er—ubiquitous. I come out to sew under the trees, glance up, and there you are, waving a tennis racquet from the terrace. I play a couple of setts to oblige you, and then say, 'Now I must resume work.' You follow and hinder one. I sit down to practice my songs—there you are with one elbow on the piano, or dreaming in a chair close at hand. I go for a stroll—Rose is too busy to come, so I snatch a chance of sweet solitude, and wander forth to enjoy the beauties of nature and indulge in meditation—I hear a laugh, or a shout, or some disturbing sound, and your straw hat is being raised and twirled at me from a neighboring wall or hedge. In moderation, I might find you passable, or even mildly entertaining; but, in such frequent and overwhelming doses, you pall upon me. Oh, I'm not joking; I mean every word I say; and I don't think Rose and Willie should give you the run of their house and garden to the annoyance of their visitors."

"But perhaps they know—I mean, perhaps they think that you enjoy my society. You see, I can't very well go to them and say, 'Please Rose and Willie, Lydia doesn't like me, and I want you to send me home.' And, until the house is forbidden me, I am sure to keep finding myself on the premises. I arrive without being conscious of coming. It is a wonderful thing, is being in love. I am sure, if you'd only try it, you'd like it. What do you say to half-a-dozen lessons?"

"I say, absurd. What else can I say?" She gazed around again with an air of serene indifference. "However on earth does Briggs stand the sun?"

Briggs did not seem to be standing it particularly well. He had removed his hat and was polishing his head with a bandana which had seen better, if not hotter, days.

"Briggs takes his warmth externally," said Jimmy. "He is not consumed with a fiery passion within. Now, about these lessons. I said half an hour each, but we should increase the length daily. Half-an-hour—three-quarters—an hour, and so on."

"It is merely an excuse for monopolizing my charming society."

"On the contrary, I propose to leave you quite alone for the term agreed upon, and I shall always choose my own time for the lessons."

"'Absence makes the heart,' etc. I see. It is not quite a new theory, Jimmy."

"I'm not taking out a patent for it, so it doesn't matter."

"Well, do you know, you actually begin to interest one. When do you think we'd better have the first lesson?"

"We'll have it now," said Jimmy, looking at his watch. "Just 11 o'clock, so, until 11.30, peace be with you."

He strode away, and, presently, the garden gate clicked behind him.

Lydia stood irresolute for a moment, then she laughed, and went inside to find Rose.

"Where's Jimmy?" inquired the young hostess.

"Jimmy's giving me a lesson, and he won't be back for half-an-hour."

"A lesson? What sort of a lesson?"

"A love lesson!"

"Oh!" said Rose. Then she asked for an explanation, and, with herself for the defence and Lydia for the prosecution, the strange case of Jimmy Hackerston was brought up for an immediate hearing.

Half-past 11 struck, and again Lydia heard the click of the garden gate. Do what she would, as she saw Jimmy coming seriously up the drive, she had to laugh.

Next day he gave her forty minutes in the early afternoon, but, on the day following, no allusion was made to the lessons until evening. Jimmy had brought two delightful volumes of engravings, and while Rose and Willie wandered over the lawn, seemingly forgetful of the fact that they were now a staid, married couple, he and Lydia sat in the veranda, and looked through the books. Art being one of the many subjects upon which Jimmy was well informed, the time passed magically. And thus it would have continued to pass had not that provoking young man presently pulled out his watch.

"Time for our lesson," he said. "I'll give you an hour, to-night."

And away he went. Lydia bit her lip. It was too bad to break off just when he was actually entertaining her. What a lot he knew about pictures, and how well he expressed himself! But, in spite of it all, what a fool the fellow was with his

ridiculous theories. She shut the book with a snap. The spell would be broken when he returned. Why did he not stay and utilize his opportunities, instead of risking her displeasure in this way? She joined Willie and Rose in the garden.

Next morning she received her tutor very coldly, and when lesson time was announced greeted his departure with a sigh of relief. The day following he talked of Germany where business had caused him to spend several years of his life, and whither it might shortly call him again.

She grew interested in spite of her efforts to the contrary, and she marveled at the experiences he had had. She even so far forgot herself as to cry out against his occasional substitution of a summary for a detailed account.

"Oh, don't go snipping and cutting like a sub-editor," she said. "I want a seven-course dinner, not a tabloid."

Jimmy consulted his watch, and Lydia gave a gesture of annoyance.

"Oh, you silly fellow, are you still going on with that farce?" she cried.

"If you have learned the lesson my tutorship shall cease to-day," said Jimmy.

"Well, I haven't learned it, and, what's more, I never shall. It is something that cannot be taught; and, beside, you are altogether too absurd, you know, to be taken seriously."

"It is half-past 3," said Jimmy. "The conference will resume at 4.45."

"No, it won't. Rose and I are going for a drive, and shall not be back until 6."

"Ah! Let me see, then—8.30, let us say."

"I am not the host—neither am I the hostess."

"Now, that is uncourteous. I am afraid you are studying too hard, and are feeling a little overstrung. But you must not imagine that only the pupil is affected by the strain of these studies. The tutor is working quite as hard. I am practicing until I can keep away, perhaps a whole day—then a week—then a month—then a year—and then—— But we are lapsing into tragedy!"

Lydia laughed nervously.

"Oh, go and teach your system to a German girl," she said. "Gretchen may prove an apter pupil."

Jimmy smiled, and Lydia thought she saw a retrospective light in his eyes.

"I wonder," he said. "Her name is not Gretchen, though—and she was rather young, but she will have grown older. It is not at all a bad idea."

"You are very, very, very absurd," said Lydia.

"I am very forgetful. Here, it is twenty-five to 4, and I am still about. Good afternoon, Lydia. But I shall think over your suggestion about Gretchen."

Then, as he strode stolidly away, she heard him say to himself, in a musing undertone: "Her name wasn't Gretchen, though."

During the drive, Lydia was unusually silent.

"Thinking about your lessons, dear?" asked Rose.

"Don't please mention lessons out of school," said Lydia.

Rose laughed, and looked a question at her friend which the friend ignored. So Rose looked her question at the wayside flowers, and one little blossom nodded an affirmative. Lydia watched the revolving shadows of the wheels, and drew in several sharp breaths.

"To be played with—juggled with—like this," she was thinking. "It is awfully humiliating. Does he think for a moment that I take him in earnest—with his Gretchens? Her name wasn't Gretchen—I wonder what it was. Oh, it is too ridiculous to think about. To-morrow, thank goodness, I have a whole day free."

"Rose, we'll have a jolly day to-morrow," she said aloud. "Jimmy will be away, and we can enjoy ourselves in freedom. I wonder you encourage such a bore—he is never off the doorstep."

"Jimmy and Willie and I are old friends, and, you see, we shan't have him for long now. He goes away next week."

"Next week, is it? Rose, how is it you think Jimmy so nice and I find him so objectionable?"

"Do you find him objectionable?"

"Do I? Why, don't I have the fidgets whenever I know he's coming?"

"Yes, dear. And particularly if he's late."

"Rose!"

"Nervous tension, I suppose."

"Of course, like waiting at a dentist's."

"Precisely," said Rose.

That evening Lydia thought of several sharp things to say to Jimmy when he should arrive. She would show him how clearly she saw through his little tricks and subterfuges; how perfectly unimpressible she was; and, therefore, how thoroughly he was wasting the valuable time of both. And Jimmy never came.

"Rose," said Lydia, when 10 o'clock struck, "I think I'll go to bed. I can't settle down to anything else, somehow. Good night, dear; good night, Willie. And Rose, if you don't give over smiling in that perfectly maddening, unfathomable way, I'll never be friends with you again. And you shan't have your fortnight in London. There!"

On Friday evening, Jimmy came. Lydia saw him from an upstairs window as he stood talking to Willie and showing him some business papers. His face was grave and earnest, and Lydia, as she watched, thought that if it had not belonged to the perfectly insupportable Jimmy, it was just the face she could have admired.

Presently the reports were restored to Jimmy's pocket and Rose joined the two men. Then Lydia drew in a deep breath, and, telling herself that another spell of boredom was at hand, ran lightly down the stairs. Half-an-hour later, in the cool, peaceful dusk, she and Jimmy found themselves near the arbor overlooking the tennis-lawn.

"Well, Lydia, have I to try this system on the German girl?" he asked. "Is German aptitude always to triumph over English?"

"Yes; try it on Gretchen, or whatever her name is."

"You are perfectly and honestly sure that you have not mastered the task I set you?"

"I am a dull scholar."

"It would be a 'viva voce' examination, remember; and if the examiner were lenient and helpful—don't you think you might pull through?"

"I am sorry, Jimmy, but—I am afraid not. I think it would be better and—and wiser to forget your very unsatisfactory pupil."

"That is to be my task?" He laughed cheerlessly. "I am afraid we are neither of us equal to our lesson."

There ensued a silence, which Lydia, though wishful, felt powerless to break.

"Well, good night," said Jimmy at last. "To-morrow even-

ing I shall call round to say good-bye. And then for a jolly long lesson—eighteen months or perhaps two years. When I return you will probably have learned it—from another task-master.”

Then he strode away, unconscious that the back of his head and the set of his retreating figure were pleading for him with a pathetic eloquence all their own. Lydia watched him until he turned up the drive, then she sat down in the arbor and gave herself up to earnest thought. If Jimmy had won her heart, it would, she argued, have been in spite of his mode of wooing—certainly not because of it. She would feel such a fool being won in such a way. But then—and here she rose and sighed impatiently—there are so many ways of being a fool, and, in avoiding one method, it is so easy to adopt another.

Jimmy had been saying good-bye to Rose and Willie, and now he came forth into the soft moonlight, and paused on the terrace. Then Lydia, standing by the iron gate, heard his step on the gravel path. He quickened his pace on seeing her, and held out his hand. He seemed anxious to get it over, but Lydia hesitated before giving him hers. Jimmy looked at her gravely and searchingly. He marked a slight agitation in her manner, and, he thought—but the light rendered it uncertain—a heightened color in her cheeks. These signs, with any past encouragement to build upon, would, of course, have filled his heart with rejoicing, but as it was——

Lydia was speaking.

“I—I just wanted to say, Jimmy, before you go,” she said, “that if you have time and would care to hear me, I—I’ve learned the lesson, and I think I can say it without a mistake.”

His lips parted as if he would interrupt, and his eyes glowed with a half-doubting, yet wholly indescribable happiness.

“I—I love you, Jimmy,” said Lydia. “That’s right, is it not?”

“You are a credit to your teacher,” said Jimmy, in a low, uncertain tone, and he drew her gently but firmly toward him.



THE LITTLE SON OF ANITA*

BY MRS. M. L. RAYNE



WE found her one day when we were exploring that part of New Mexico, making collections from the fauna and flora of the country for the Smithsonian Institute, and never expecting to see anything so deliciously perfect as that barbaric specimen of Mexican beauty, as she stood winnowing beans in the shade of her adobe hut. She wore only the camisole, the single garment of her people, but her brown bare arms were strung with bracelets; silver beads and rings and earrings set off her rich ripe beauty and accentuated her charms, and corals made the dull black of her unbound hair take on the soft effect of velvet against the rosy red of her oval cheek. Her perfect chin was dimpled, a rare type in New Mexico, but explained by other traces of Castilian blood. And she was married to a Navajo Indian—poor Anita!

*Written for Short Stories.

Why the girl should have selected him from among a number of more desirable and richer suitors no one could tell. He was an inferior man even among his own people, of squat figure and most disagreeable features. She was already a widow when she married Manuel Ascham, having espoused old Jesus Martin when she was fifteen. He had died when she was twenty, leaving her money enough to say masses for the repose of his soul, and a boy of four years, who was as beautiful as his mother—and that is saying a great deal.

We saw them often, and never tired of feasting our eyes on the wonderful bodily graces of the two—the boy like some wild thing, his perfect limbs unclad, save on festa days, his great dreamy eyes always full of slumber, his red pouting lips ever warm with his mother's kisses. She loved him as such women love one human thing out of the whole world, and she cared not at all for her husband or any other man. Only little Jean, the rosy rogue!

One day we found the little fellow tumbling in the sand with a small vagrant dog, that had been beaten and starved, but which was at once chosen by little Jean to be his comrade.

"Wait me a little, thou," expostulated his mother. "I thee will make to have a 'bijuela,' my son, and thou canst play the so sweet moosic."

Anita was as good as her word. She let the Americanos watch her long brown fingers fashion the native jews'-harp from a weed stalk and a linen thread, and then she taught the boy to put it between his small white teeth and fan it so that sweet strains would come. Even the babies of that wonderful land can learn the tempo.

But Jean was soon displeased with his "bijuela," and wanted the brown dog that was like a skeleton dog, but very good and loving, and after he had eaten several "frijoles," could play like a little brother. And we, coming from a land where the dog is always the honored guest of the family, prevailed upon her to keep the cur and give it a trial. If it should prove troublesome we showed Manuel, before we left, how he could easily dispose of it. And thereby the Americanos became participators in a very strange tragedy.

Anita gave us some idea of why she made such an unequal marriage. She chose Manuel Ascham because he had the cunning to make love to her little son. He had taken him to the festa pig-a-back, he had danced for him and sung "El Car-

bonero," and taught him to ride a burro like a cavalier, and brought him sweets from the shops in the city. So, as it was lonesome with no man to come home from the orchard or the herding, she married Manuel and gave Jean a father, for it pleased her that the two were so fond of each other. Besides she trusted Manuel. But whoever trusts a Navajo Indian must keep both eyes watching. He will not mistreat his wife, for the laws of his people forbid that women should be treated as inferiors, and he will not order her to saddle his burro, or do any menial work for him; but he thinks, and an Indian of that country who thinks is dangerous and unscrupulous.

When Manuel began life he had only a spade, but he was going to show the other lovers of Anita that she did well to marry him, and he worked hard, and now had goats and chickens; oats growing six feet high, and a fine herd of the small, lean sheep of the country that have long horns, and whose flesh is sweet and juicy.

Manuel hated little Jean, whose father was dead and could not help him. He was jealous to the death of the poor baby, and each kiss Anita gave to the boy planted a fresh sting in that Indian heart.

But outwardly he was as kind as usual to Jean, and when the pretty boy would cling to his treacherous hand and coax to walk half-way up the slope among the cedars with him on his way to the goat herding, Manuel would fondle and caress the little brown hand, and all the time he was thinking his Indian thoughts.

One day when Manuel went, Jean wanted to stay at home and play with Teja, the half-starved cur that was now as round and plump as Jean's self.

"Go thou, then, dear little one," said his mother, "and take thou the poor Teja, thou lovest him so."

She kissed the rosy boy until he glowed like a red rose, but he hung back and fretted for Teja, who would not go, and had even hidden himself in the adobe hut, ungrateful beast that he was!

"Thou must stay with Manuel until sundown, then come thou home together—thou wilt come then, 'mio amigo'?" this to her husband.

"If naught should happen," he replied indifferently in his Mexican speech, and she answered, "Bueno," and went about her work.

Up, up the Indian climbed over the long slope that led to the herding, up to where the mesa breaks into a cliff, and in the deep trough filled with soft sweet grass, to where the sheep and goats were herded. The last were browsing on the very edge of the cliffs among the rocks of many-colored clay, which are so beautiful, that some one has said of them that like the dearest woman they can never be adequately photographed.

Of what was the Indian thinking? Not of the grandeur of his native country, nor of the time when he would be one of the sheep kings of the territory? No. He was thinking where he could make a little grave.

In his pocket was the bottle of colorless fluid the Americans had left for use on the vagrant cur, and if it would so nicely kill a dog, why then the child should not suffer, and Anita would soon forget if he was found asleep—that little Jean—where he had wandered. As for himself he would go at Easter and give himself three hundred blows with the Penitentes, and he would whip much harder than if he had only stolen a cow, and he would carry the heaviest cross, and after the discipline of castigation there would be the masses for the repose of little Jean's soul. It would be all right.

Poor little Jean! When he had smelled obediently of the "so nice Americano medicine," his bright eyes drooped and closed, and his pretty head with its glistening brown curls lay quietly on Manuel's shoulder, and the red drained from his round cheeks. Then that traitor believed he could safely leave him in a hollow where he dug a shallow grave, covering the child from sight with freshly plucked grass and green leaves. He hurried so that if any one came he could say it was one of the lambs that had died. Poor lamb!

Anita had the "frijoles" for supper ready when Manuel came home alone. She asked him where little Jean was, and he told her, with a foolish laugh, that she was trying to frighten him—Manuel—for that little Jean had only gone half-way, and then turned back. But he was afraid of the glare in her eyes, as if the light had been stricken out.

"He go so little way by me—he want mooch his madre and he come back."

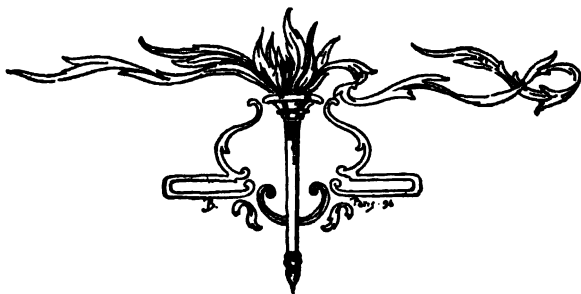
She searched for him like a mad thing, she and the cur who had gone an hour before to look for his playmate, and who found him first.

Manuel dared not stay in the lonesome little hut that night,

and he went where men were carousing and forgot himself in drink. The next day he lay like a log in the herding, but the next night he went boldly home, and found the cabin lighted with tapers, and the priest chanting prayers for the repose of the dead. Then Anita had given up hope of ever finding the boy? That was well, and he slipped in to kneel by his wife, and join in the responses.

But, Santa Maria! what was there? The child he had buried was alive and well, dressed like the Holy Babe, and held in its mother's arms, who would have looked a veritable Madonna, only for the fierce hatred that shone in her eyes as they rested on that traitor Manuel. Why, even Teja was there, with a wreath of jewels on his ugly neck. And well he might be, for although the Indian did not know it, it was the cur that had found Jean before it was too late, and had rescued the little fellow by scratching away the covering from his insufficient grave. With a wild cry of horrid rage and disappointment Manuel drew a knife and hurled himself on the little group, only to be seized by strong hands, and how it happened no one ever cared to know, but the treacherous knife found its way to his own black heart.

And the priest continued chanting prayers for the repose of the dead.





BEFORE THE SALON*

BY CHARLES LEROY

GALIMARD is an artist, and one year he decided to exhibit something. The picture on its completion enchanted him; it had been painted in the strictest seclusion, for fear the idea might be stolen, but now that the time for sending it in has arrived, that anxiety is removed, and he invites two friends to inspect his work.

First Friend—Ah! ah! so that's the thing, is it? By Jove! but it's good, old fellow!

Second Friend—Hurrah for the dog! Where did you get your idea?

Galimard—Oh, it's quite a long story! I was coming back from Nanterre one day, and from the car-window I saw this garden, with the children playing among the trees and the big dog running and jumping around them. The thing so fascinated me that I went back on foot, made several studies, and here you are!

First Friend—My dear boy, it's a fine piece of work.

Second Friend—It's simple; but you've hit it just right. Where did you find the youngsters?

Galimard—They are my little nephews.

First Friend—There is one little thing I notice, though. Do you mind my speaking of it?

Galimard—Why, of course not. One cannot always judge of effects oneself. Good advice is always welcome.

Second Friend—Especially a friend's advice.

First Friend—Well, then, old fellow, your sky is a trifle too clear. You should cloud it a little.

Galimard—Do you think so?

First Friend—Yes; because, you see, you didn't pose your

*Translated by F. A. Weston from the French.

brats out-of-doors, and they haven't the—you catch what I mean?

Galimard—Yes, yes; let me see—a little smudge of cloud right here, perhaps; well, if you think——

Second Friend—Oh, yes, my dear boy, yes—and put one in here, too.

First Friend—That youngster there is hit off to the life, isn't he, Chose?

Second Friend—Seems to me he has a sort of frightened look. If I were Galimard I would take away the other one, the one who's laughing, because you can't see what he's laughing at. Don't you think so, Machin?

First Friend—Oh, he could leave the one who's laughing if he liked, and take away the frightened one, for, as you say, they don't correspond—one or the other would have to go.

Galimard—Why, I thought they were rather effective, the two contrasting faces.

Second Friend—That's all very well, my dear boy; but then, it ceases to be a picture. It is simply a study of heads, of grimaces.

First Friend—He's right; take out the laughing boy. Besides, he isn't as well done as the other. He looks just a little bit like a monkey.

Galimard—But, you see, that one all alone——

First Friend—I agree with you perfectly; but this is what you could do: To explain his fright, let the house be burning up—he could be running away from the fire.

Second Friend—Good! That's a capital idea; but, in that case, he would have to take away the trees, otherwise you couldn't see——

Galimard—But that changes my whole picture. I would rather leave in the laughing one.

Second Friend—Oh, of course, if you like—only what in the world is he laughing at? Besides, if you wanted to make him your principal subject, you should have put him in the foreground.

First Friend—The fact is that over there in that corner, where the dog is, the perspective is not at all clear, and then your house is all mixed up with the trees in the foreground. You ought to put your trees behind.

Second Friend—Or take them away altogether; that would free the house.

Galimard—But, you see, if I only leave one child——

Second Friend—I have an idea. Will you allow me? Take out the house and trees and put them off there in the background, leave the frightened boy where he is, and make a lion rush down upon him from a mountain. Your sky is warm, the whole thing will look like an African scene.

Galimard—A great idea! But how about the costume?

First Friend—Oh, that's simple enough. Chose is right; you'd have a superb effect there. All you have to do is to dress the little fellow like a Bedouin. Come to think of it, you should make him larger—a young man, in fact.

Second Friend—Or an old man with a gray beard.

First Friend—Oh, I'll tell you what would be stunning! A negro with snow-white hair. You'd make a sensation then, and no mistake!

Galimard—Yes; but that's entirely departing from my subject.

First Friend—Not necessarily; only altering it a little. Make your negro nude. In that way you'd have a fine relief effect, and it would be strange indeed if your picture did not create a stir.

Galimard—I would never have believed——

First Friend—Well, you see, you asked our opinion, and, being friends, we gave it to you.

When his two friends have left, Galimard hurries off to consult others.

One alteration after another is suggested, until finally he is advised by some to change the subject of his picture to a "Cab-stand," or the "Arrival of an Excursion Train"; and by others to the "Wreck of the *Méduse*," the "Execution of Louis XVI.," etc., etc.

In short, Galimard never exhibited at all, because in the end he became insane.



ALLEGRO NON TROPPO*

BY WILSON ASHLEY BURROWS



OR the first time since adopting music as his profession George Hartley began to weary of it; and as he entered the stage door of the prominent theatre on upper Broadway, where he was employed, he wondered at the enthusiasm and excitement which he once used to feel whenever he passed those dingy portals.

Reaching his seat in the orchestra he mechanically turned on the electric light over his stand, recalling with a smile the feeling of almost stage fright which had attacked him, and how he had missed his cues on the first night of his engagement there; but three months had been enough to make him as blasé as the rest of his associates. For the past few weeks he had been rehearsing almost constantly, as it was the busiest part of the season; and a diversity of music, fragments of symphonies and coster songs, string quartets and two-steps intruded upon his meditations as he slipped the canvas case from his 'cello and began to tune with an abstracted expression of countenance.

The other musicians were struggling through the diminutive door under the stage, and an oboe player, after testing his reed, began a soliloquy in "A" minor, which provoked a torrent of other "A's," and scraping of fifths, while a clarinetist ran nimbly up and down the scale in chromatics and broken chords, ushers meanwhile darting hither and thither, accompanied by much banging of seats.

At this theatre the orchestra employed but one 'cellist, and Hartley therefore had a desk to himself, just in front of the contra-bass player, who was one of his boon companions, and who had a playful habit of poking him in the back with his bow

*Written for Short Stories.

whenever he wished to call his attention to anything in the audience or on the stage.

They had been playing an inane operetta for two months or more, and were all heartily sick of the music, which had long since been memorized, leaving their eyes little else to do but to roam about in an incurious survey of the audience, when not watching the conductor, which, indeed, had become almost unnecessary.

Before the first act was over Hartley, who had been unusually attentive to the proceedings on the stage (in fact, looking to see how an understudy acquitted herself), felt the inevitable poke from his friend's bow. Intuitively he glanced up and down the rows of spectators nearest him, finally concluding that his friend was referring to a party of four, evidently father, mother and two daughters, one of whom, a young woman of twenty or twenty-two, sat near enough to him to be reached with his bow, gazing at the stage as though entranced, and as Hartley could plainly see, with eyes brimful of tears. The understudy who had engaged his attention was singing the usual sentimental romance, which even the most farcical of operettas always contains, and singing it exceptionally well, her diction being excellent, which may in a measure have accounted for the spell she had cast over the girl.

Hartley's interest in the understudy immediately vanished, and almost unconsciously he began to play with more care, infusing such warmth into his phrases that the conductor looked around half-reprovingly. Hartley's efforts were not thrown away, for the girl thenceforth divided her attention between the stage and the orchestra, to the delight of the susceptible 'cellist.

At the first intermission the friends rushed across the street together and into a café to compare notes.

"Well, old chap, what do you think of her?" demanded the contra-bass.

"She's a little angel—that's all," said Hartley. "Did you see her lovely eyes filled with tears while Dennison was singing? She has a tender little heart—you can make up your mind to that."

"Oh, pshaw!" said the cynical contra-bass. "Don't rhapsodize. She's simply unaccustomed to the theatre, that's all."

"Who is this?" asked a fellow-musician, who, in passing, had caught the last half-dozen words.

"Why, that blonde girl in the front row, four from the aisle, near Hartley. He's losing his head over her."

"Well," said the newcomer, smiling grimly, "she's more familiar with the theatre than you fellows think. She is a pupil of Hillen's, the concert-meister, you know, and they say she's going to marry him, so I would advise our excellent 'cellist to dismiss her from his thoughts right speedily."

After a little more bantering among themselves they hurried back to the theatre, but before they started across Broadway a friend of Hartley's accosting him, detained him for a few seconds, while the others went on without him.

As soon as his friend released him, he hurried across, fearing to be late; but had to pause an instant while a cable car passed, and then sprang forward, only to be bowled over by one from an opposite direction. The usual curious throng collected, and gazed at the unconscious musician, until an ambulance clattered up, and bore him away. The sightseers then dispersed, many of them going into the theatre where the injured man was anxiously awaited, the annoyed leader of the orchestra questioning the men who were with Hartley, but who could not explain his absence further than that he was last seen speaking with a friend on the other side of Broadway; but finally a substitute was luckily discovered and the operetta proceeded.

When Hartley recovered consciousness, which he did soon after reaching the hospital, he was dismayed when told what had happened to him, and looked with fearful apprehension to see whether his fingers, wrists and arms were intact. Finding these important members unharmed after a series of tentative gymnastics, he became quite tranquil, and wondering a little how they got along at the theatre without him, had his bruises (which were numerous but not very painful) attended to, and philosophically went to sleep.

He awoke early in the morning, convinced that he would be kept but very little longer in such unfamiliar duress; but, on learning that he would have to stand it for twenty-four hours longer, was filled with disgust. So he arranged to have several messages sent out to his friends and the theatre, and then, discovering a back number of a cheap and popular magazine in a niche near his cot, began to read.

Several minutes later, a nurse whom he had not observed before, but whose face seemed strangely familiar, entered the

ward. "Where have I seen her?" he wondered, and racked his brain over this for several minutes, while the object of his conjectures remained at the other end of the room.

But when she finished what she had been doing and approached his cot, Hartley, with a thrill, recognized the girl who had been seated so near him at the theatre the night before.

Still he was skeptical.

"Oh, no," he reasoned. "That's impossible. Such coincidences never happen off the stage, or outside of novels. What a striking resemblance, though!"

As she reached his cot and smiled frankly at him he was too much dazed to do anything but gaze stupidly at her; but she recognized him at once.

"Why!" she exclaimed, "is it possible that you are the violoncellist that I saw at the theatre last night? Went out after the first act and didn't come back?"

Hartley nodded, too surprised for speech.

"Then this accounts for your absence—you were run over?"

Hartley recovered himself enough to answer her question, and, although the beauty of her face and the sweetness of her voice had a tendency to make him feel something alarmingly like bashfulness, they were soon chatting with great cordiality. They found each other so entertaining that Hartley was soon emboldened to say:

"I beg that you'll pardon my curiosity, but while I was in a café last night, just before I was upset, some of us—some of the fellows in the orchestra who had observed you in the front row, were rude enough to discuss you, though not by name. Part of this discussion I overheard. Some one volunteered the information that you were a pupil of Mr. Hillen, our concert-meister."

"Yes," she said quietly, "I am," and an indignant glow crept into her cheeks; but Hartley could not restrain himself.

"Oh, I beg of you, don't be offended! I wouldn't offer you the slightest discourtesy for worlds; but, as Walther says to Eva in *The Meistersingers*, I have 'one thing to ask you, one to discover.' Was that gossiping cad right when he said that you were Hillen's promised wife?" and heedless of his bruises he impetuously sat upright in his cot.

She regarded him for a moment with eyes so beautiful that he thought he should swoon beneath them.

"I am Mr. Hillen's pupil—nothing more," and she turned away, blushing, but smilingly.

* * * * *

Less than a year afterward two musicians, as they sat in the Aschenbroedel Club rooms, having imbibed enough of their favorite Teutonic beverage to dispel all constraint, spake thus :

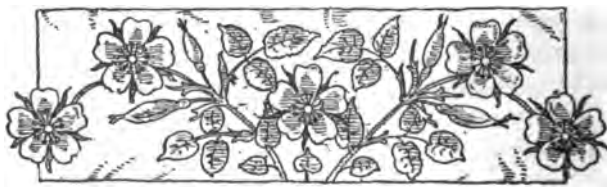
"But, Hillen, my dear fellow, speaking of pupils, what has become of that beautiful girl who studied with you so long—the one who tried hospital nursing for a while? The boys had it that you were going to marry her."

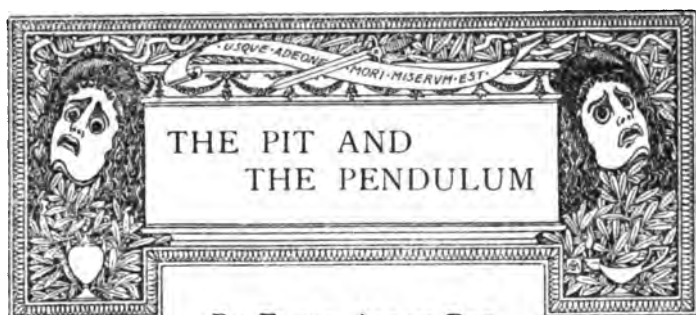
Hillen looked unhappy.

"Ach! She's taken a fool fancy to the 'cello!"

"So! Who's her teacher, for heaven's sake?"

"Her husband."





BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

Famous Story Series

I WAS sick—sick unto death with that long agony ; and when they at length unbound me and I was permitted to sit, I felt that my senses were leaving me. The sentence—the dread sentence of death—was the last of distinct accentuation which reached my ears. After that the sound of the inquisitorial voices seemed merged in one dreamy indeterminate hum. It conveyed to my soul the idea of revolution—perhaps from its association in fancy with the burr of a mill-wheel. This only for a brief period, for presently I heard no more. Yet, for a while I saw ; but with how terrible an exaggeration ! I saw the lips of the black-robed judges. They appeared to me white—whiter than the sheet upon which I trace these words—and thin, even to grotesqueness ; thin with the intensity of their expression of firmness—of immovable resolution—of stern contempt of human torture. I saw that the decrees of what to me was Fate, were still issuing from those lips. I saw them writhe with a deadly locution. I saw them fashion the syllables of my name, and I shuddered, because no sound succeeded. I saw, too, for a few moments of delirious horror, the soft and nearly imperceptible waving of the sable draperies which enveloped the walls of the apartment. And then my vision fell upon the seven tall candles upon the table. At first they wore the aspect of charity, and seemed white, slender angels, who would save me ; but then, all at once, there came a most deadly nausea over my spirit, and I felt every fibre in my frame thrill as if I had touched the wire of a galvanic battery, while the

angel forms became meaningless spectres, with heads of flame, and I saw that from them there would be no help. And then there stole into my fancy, like a rich musical note, the thought of what sweet rest there must be in the grave. The thought came gently and stealthily, and it seemed long before it attained full appreciation; but just as my spirit came at length properly to feel and entertain it, the figures of the judges vanished, as if magically, from before me; the tall candles sank into nothingness; their flames went out utterly. The blackness of darkness supervened—all sensations appeared swallowed up in a mad rushing descent as of the soul into Hades. Then silence, and stillness, and night were the universe.

I had swooned; but still will not say that all of consciousness was lost. What of it there remained I will not attempt to define, or even to describe; yet all of it was not lost. In the deepest slumber—no! In delirium—no! In a swoon—no! In death—no! Even in the grave all is not lost. Else there is no immortality for man. Arousing from the most profound of slumbers we break the gossamer web of some dream. Yet in a second afterward (so frail may that web have been) we remember not that we have dreamed. In the return to life from the swoon there are two stages: First, that of the sense of mental or spiritual; secondly, that of the sense of physical, existence. It seems probable that if, upon reaching the second stage, we could recall the impressions of the first, we should find these impressions eloquent in memories of the gulf beyond. And that gulf is—what? How at least shall we distinguish its shadows from those of the tomb? But if the impressions of what I have termed the first stage are not, at will, recalled, yet, after long interval, do they not come unbidden, while we marvel whence they come? He who has never swooned is not he who finds strange palaces and wildly familiar faces in coals that glow; is not he who beholds floating in mid-air the sad visions that the many may not view; is not he who ponders over the perfume of some novel flower; is not he whose brain grows bewildered with the meaning of some musical cadence which has never before arrested his attention.

Amid frequent and thoughtful endeavors to remember, amid earnest struggles to regather some token of the state of seeming nothingness into which my soul had lapsed, there have been moments when I have dreamed of success; there have been brief, very brief periods when I have conjured up re-

membrances which the lucid reason of a later epoch assures me could have had reference only to that condition of seeming unconsciousness. These shadows of memory tell, indistinctly, of tall figures that lifted and bore me in silence down—down—still down—till a hideous dizziness oppressed me at the mere idea of the interminableness of the descent. They tell also of a vague horror at my heart, on account of that heart's unnatural stillness. Then comes a sense of sudden motionlessness throughout all things, as if those who bore me (a ghastly train!) had outrun, in their descent, the limits of the limitless, and paused from the wearisomeness of their toil. After this I call to mind flatness and dampness; and then all is madness—the madness of a memory which busies itself among forbidden things.

Very suddenly there came back to my soul motion and sound—the tumultuous motion of the heart, and, in my ears, the sound of its beating. Then a pause in which all is blank. Then again sound, and motion, and touch—a tingling sensation pervading my frame. Then the mere consciousness of existence, without thought—a condition which lasted long. Then, very suddenly, thought, and shuddering terror, and earnest endeavor to comprehend my true state. Then a strong desire to lapse into insensibility. Then a rushing revival of soul and a successful effort to move. And now a full memory of the trial, of the judges, of the sable draperies, of the sentence, of the sickness, of the swoon. Then entire forgetfulness of all that followed; of all that a later day and much earnestness of endeavor have enabled me vaguely to recall.

So far I had not opened my eyes. I felt that I lay upon my back, unbound. I reached out my hand, and it fell heavily upon something damp and hard. There I suffered it to remain for many minutes, while I strove to imagine where and what I could be. I longed, yet dared not to employ my vision. I dreaded the first glance at objects around me. It was not that I feared to look upon things horrible, but that I grew aghast lest there should be nothing to see. At length, with a wild desperation at heart, I quickly unclosed my eyes. My worst thoughts, then, were confirmed. The blackness of eternal night encompassed me. I struggled for breath. The intensity of the darkness seemed to oppress and stifle me. The atmosphere was intolerably close. I still lay quietly, and made effort to exercise my reason. I brought to mind the in-

quisitorial proceedings, and attempted from that point to deduce my real condition. The sentence had passed, and it appeared to me that a very long interval of time had since elapsed. Yet not for a moment did I suppose myself actually dead. Such a supposition, notwithstanding what we read in fiction, is altogether inconsistent with real existence; but where and in what state was I? The condemned to death, I knew, perished usually at the "auto-da-fés," and one of these had been held on the very night of the day of my trial. Had I been remanded to my dungeon, to await the next sacrifice, which would not take place for many months? This I at once saw could not be. Victims had been in immediate demand. Moreover, my dungeon, as well as all the condemned cells at Toledo, had stone floors, and light was not altogether excluded.

A fearful idea now suddenly drove the blood in torrents upon my heart, and for a brief period I once more relapsed into insensibility. Upon recovering, I at once started to my feet, trembling convulsively in every fibre. I thrust my arms wildly above and around me in all directions. I felt nothing—yet dreaded to move a step, lest I should be impeded by the walls of a tomb. Perspiration burst from every pore, and stood in cold, big beads upon my forehead. The agony of suspense grew at length intolerable, and I cautiously moved forward, with my arms extended, and my eyes straining from their sockets, in the hope of catching some faint ray of light. I proceeded for many paces, but still all was blackness and vacancy. I breathed more freely. It seemed evident that mine was not, at least, the most hideous of fates.

And now, as I still continued to step cautiously onward, there came thronging upon my recollection a thousand vague rumors of the horrors of Toledo. Of the dungeons there had been strange things narrated—fables I had always deemed them—but yet strange, and too ghastly to repeat, save in a whisper. Was I left to perish of starvation in this subterranean world of darkness; or what fate, perhaps even more fearful, awaited me? That the result would be death, and a death of more than customary bitterness, I knew too well the character of my judges to doubt. The mode and the hour were all that occupied or distracted me.

My outstretched hands at length encountered some solid obstruction. It was a wall, seemingly of stone masonry—very smooth, slimy and cold. I followed it up, stepping with all the

careful distrust with which certain antique narratives had inspired me. This process, however, afforded me no means of ascertaining the dimensions of my dungeon; as I might make its circuit, and return to the point where I set out, without being aware of the fact, so perfectly uniform seemed the wall. I therefore sought the knife which had been in my pocket, when led into the inquisitorial chamber, but it was gone; my clothes had been exchanged for a wrapper of coarse serge. I had thought of forcing the blade in some minute crevice of the masonry, so as to identify my point of departure. The difficulty, nevertheless, was but trivial; although, in the disorder of my fancy, it seemed at first insuperable. I tore a part of the hem from the robe and placed the fragment at full length, and at right angles to the wall. In groping my way around the prison I could not fail to encounter this rag upon completing the circuit. So, at least, I thought; but I had not counted upon the extent of the dungeon, or upon my own weakness. The ground was moist and slippery. I staggered onward for some time, when I stumbled and fell. My excessive fatigue induced me to remain prostrate, and sleep soon overtook me as I lay.

Upon awaking and stretching forth an arm I found beside me a loaf and a pitcher of water. I was too much exhausted to reflect upon this circumstance, but ate and drank with avidity. Shortly afterward I resumed my tour around the prison, and with much toil came at last upon the fragment of the serge. Up to the period when I fell I had counted fifty-two paces, and upon resuming my walk I had counted forty-eight more—when I arrived at the rag. There were in all, then, a hundred paces; and, admitting two paces to the yard, I presumed the dungeon to be fifty yards in circuit. I had met, however, with many angles in the wall, and thus I could form no guess at the shape of the vault, for vault I could not help supposing it to be.

I had little object—certainly no hope—in these researches; but a vague curiosity prompted me to continue them. Quitting the wall, I resolved to cross the area of the inclosure. At first, I proceeded with extreme caution, for the floor, although seemingly of solid material, was treacherous with slime. At length, however, I took courage, and did not hesitate to step firmly, endeavoring to cross in as direct a line as possible. I had advanced some ten or twelve paces in this manner, when

the remnant of the torn hem of my robe became entangled between my legs. I stepped on it, and fell violently on my face.

In the confusion attending my fall, I did not immediately apprehend a somewhat startling circumstance, which yet, in a few seconds afterward, and while I still lay prostrate, arrested my attention. It was this: My chin rested upon the floor of the prison, but my lips, and the upper portion of my head, although seemingly at a less elevation than the chin, touched nothing. At the same time my forehead seemed bathed in a clammy vapor, and the peculiar smell of decayed fungus arose to my nostrils. I put forward my arm, and shuddered to find that I had fallen at the very brink of a circular pit, whose extent, of course, I had no means of ascertaining at the moment. Groping about the masonry just below the margin, I succeeded in dislodging a small fragment, and let it fall into the abyss. For many second I hearkened to its reverberations as it dashed against the sides of the chasm in its descent; at length there was a sullen plunge into water, succeeded by loud echoes. At the same moment there came a sound resembling the quick opening and as rapid closing of a door overhead, while a faint gleam of light flashed suddenly through the gloom, and as suddenly faded away.

I saw clearly the doom which had been prepared for me, and congratulated myself upon the timely accident by which I had escaped. Another step before my fall, and the world had seen me no more. And the death just avoided was of that very character which I had regarded as fabulous and frivolous in the tales respecting the Inquisition. To the victims of its tyranny there was the choice of death with its direst physical agonies, or death with its most hideous moral horrors. I had been reserved for the latter. By long suffering my nerves had been unstrung, until I trembled at the sound of my own voice, and had become in every respect a fitting subject for the species of torture which awaited me.

Shaking in every limb I groped my way back to the wall, resolving there to perish rather than risk the terrors of the wells, of which my imagination now picture many in various positions about the dungeon. In other conditions of mind I might have had courage to end my misery at once, by a plunge into one of these abysses; but now I was the veriest of cowards. Neither could I forget what I had read of these pits—

that the sudden extinction of life formed no part of their most horrible plan.

Agitation of spirit kept me awake for many long hours ; but at length I again slumbered. Upon arousing I found by my side, as before, a loaf and a pitcher of water. A burning thirst consumed me, and I emptied the vessel at a draught. It must have been drugged, for scarcely had I drunk before I became irresistibly drowsy. A deep sleep fell upon me—a sleep like that of death. How long it lasted, of course, I know not ; but when once again I unclosed my eyes the objects around me were visible. By a wild, sulphurous lustre, the origin of which I could not at first determine, I was enabled to see the extent and aspect of the prison.

In its size I had been greatly mistaken. The whole circuit of its walls did not exceed twenty-five yards. For some minutes this fact occasioned me a world of vain trouble ; vain indeed, for what could be of less importance, under the terrible circumstances which environed me, than the mere dimensions of my dungeon ? But my soul took a wild interest in trifles, and I busied myself in endeavors to account for the error I had committed in my measurement. The truth at length flashed upon me. In my first attempt at exploration I had counted fifty-two paces, up to the period when I fell ; I must then have been within a pace or two of the fragment of serge ; in fact, I had nearly performed the circuit of the vault. I then slept, and, upon awaking, I must have returned upon my steps, thus supposing the circuit near double what it actually was. My confusion of mind prevented me from observing that I began my tour with the wall to the left, and ended it with the wall to the right.

I had been deceived, too, in respect to the shape of the inclosure. In feeling my way I had found many angles, and thus deduced an idea of great irregularity ; so potent is the effect of total darkness upon one arousing from lethargy or sleep ! The angles were simply those of a few slight depressions, or niches, at odd intervals. The general shape of the prison was square. What I had taken for masonry seemed now to be iron, or some other metal, in huge plates, whose sutures or joints occasioned the depressions. The entire surface of this metallic inclosure was rudely daubed in all the hideous and repulsive devices to which the charnal superstition of the monks has given rise. The figures of fiends in aspects of menace, with skeleton forms

and other more really fearful images, overspread and disfigured the walls. I observed that the outlines of these monstrosities were sufficiently distinct, but that the colors seemed faded and blurred, as if from the effects of a damp atmosphere. I now noticed the floor, too, which was of stone. In the centre yawned the circular pit from whose jaws I had escaped; but it was the only one in the dungeon.

All this I saw indistinctly, and by much effort, for my personal condition had been greatly changed during slumber. I now lay upon my back, and at full length, on a species of low framework of wood. To this I was securely bound by a long strap resembling a surcingle. It passed in many convolutions about my limbs and body, leaving at liberty only my head, and my left arm to such extent that I could, by dint of much exertion, supply myself with food from an earthen dish which lay by my side on the floor. I saw, to my horror, that the pitcher had been removed. I say, to my horror, for I was consumed with intolerable thirst. This thirst it appeared to be the design of my persecutors to stimulate, for the food in the dish was meat pungently seasoned.

Looking upward I surveyed the ceiling of my prison. It was some thirty or forty feet overhead, and constructed much as the side walls. In one of its panels a very singular figure riveted my whole attention. It was the painted figure of Time as he is commonly represented, save that in lieu of a scythe he held what, at a casual glance, I supposed to be the pictured image of a huge pendulum, such as we see on antique clocks. There was something, however, in the appearance of this machine which caused me to regard it more attentively. While I gazed directly upward at it (for its position was immediately over my own), I fancied that I saw it in motion. In an instant afterward the fancy was confirmed. Its sweep was brief, and, of course, slow. I watched it for some minutes, somewhat in fear, but more in wonder. Wearied at length with observing its dull movement, I turned my eyes upon the other object in the cell.

A slight noise attracted my notice, and, looking to the floor I saw several enormous rats traversing it. They had issued from the well, which lay just within view to my right. Even then, while I gazed, they came up in troops, hurriedly, with ravenous eyes, allured by the scent of the meat. From this it required much effort and attention to scare them away.

It might have been half an hour, perhaps even an hour (for I could take but imperfect note of time), before I again cast my eyes upward. What I then saw confounded and amazed me. The sweep of the pendulum had increased in extent by nearly a yard. As a natural consequence its velocity was also much greater. But what mainly disturbed me was the idea that it had perceptibly descended. I now observed—with what horror it is needless to say—that its nether extremity was formed of a crescent of glittering steel, about a foot in length from horn to horn; the horns upward, and the under edge evidently as keen as that of a razor. Like a razor also, it seemed massy and heavy, tapering from the edge into a solid and broad structure above. It was appended to a weighty rod of brass, and the whole hissed as it swung through the air.

I could no longer doubt the doom prepared for me by monkish ingenuity in torture. My cognizance of the pit had become known to the inquisitorial agents—the pit, whose horrors had been destined for so bold a recusant as myself—the pit, typical of hell, and regarded by rumor as the “Ultima Thule” of all their punishments. The plunge into this pit I had avoided by the merest of accidents, and I knew that surprise, or entrapment into torment, formed an important portion of all the grotesquerie of these dungeon deaths. Having failed to fall, it was no part of the demon plan to hurl me into the abyss; and thus (there being no alternative) a different and a milder destruction awaited me. Milder! I have smiled in my agony as I thought of such application of such a term.

What boots it to tell of the long, long hours of horror more than mortal, during which I counted the rushing oscillations of the steel! Inch by inch, line by line with a descent only appreciable at intervals that seemed ages—down and still down it came! Days passed—it might have been that many days passed—ere it swept so closely over me as to fan me with its acrid breath. The odor of the sharp steel forced itself into my nostrils. I prayed—I wearied heaven with my prayer for its more speedy descent. I grew frantically mad, and struggled to force myself upward against the sweep of the fearful cimeter. And then I fell suddenly calm, and lay smiling at the glittering death, as a child at some rare bauble.

There was another interval of utter insensibility. It was brief, for, upon again lapsing into life, there had been no perceptible descent in the pendulum. But it might have been

long, for I knew there were demons who took note of my swoon, and who could have arrested the vibration at pleasure. Upon my recovery, too, I felt very—oh, inexpressibly—sick and weak, as if through long inanition. Even amid the agonies of that period the human nature craved food. With painful effort I outstretched my left arm as far as my bonds permitted, and took possession of the small remnant which had been spared me by the rats. As I put a portion of it within my lips there rushed to my mind a half-formed thought of joy—of hope. Yet what business had I with hope? It was, as I say, a half-formed thought—man has many such, which are never completed. I felt that it was of joy—of hope; but I felt also that it had perished in its formation. In vain I struggled to perfect—to regain it. Long suffering had nearly annihilated all my ordinary powers of mind. I was an imbecile, an idiot.

The vibration of the pendulum was at right angles to my length. I saw that the crescent was designed to cross the region of the heart. It would fray the serge of my robe; it would return and repeat its operations—again and again. Notwithstanding its terrifically wide sweep (some thirty feet or more) and the hissing vigor of its descent, sufficient to sunder these very walls of iron, still the fraying of my robe would be all that—for several minutes—it would accomplish. And at this thought I paused. I dared not go farther than this reflection. I dwelt upon it with a pertinacity of attention, as if, in so dwelling, I could arrest here the descent of the steel. I forced myself to ponder upon the sound of the crescent as it should pass across the garment, upon the peculiar thrilling sensation which the friction of cloth produces on the nerves. I pondered upon all this frivolity until my teeth were on edge.

Down, steadily down it crept. I took a frenzied pleasure in contrasting its downward with its lateral velocity. To the right, to the left, far and wide, with the shriek of a damned spirit! to my heart, with the stealthy pace of the tiger! I alternately laughed and howled, as the one or the other idea grew predominant.

Down, certainly, relentlessly down! It vibrated within three inches of my bosom! I struggled violently, furiously, to free my left arm. This was free only from the elbow to the hand. I could reach the latter, from the platter beside me, to my mouth with great effort, but no farther. Could I have broken the fastenings above the elbow, I would have seized and at-

tempted to arrest the pendulum. I might as well have attempted to arrest an avalanche!

Down, still unceasingly, still inevitably down! I gasped and struggled at each vibration. I shrunk convulsively at its every sweep. My eyes followed its outward or upward whirls with the eagerness of the most unmeaning despair; they closed themselves spasmodically at the descent, although death would have been a relief, oh, how unspeakable! Still I quivered in every nerve to think how slight a sinking of the machinery would precipitate that keen, glistening axe upon my bosom. It was hope that prompted the nerve to quiver—the frame to shrink. It was hope—the hope that triumphs on the rack, that whispers to the death-condemned even in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

I saw that some ten or twelve vibrations would bring the steel in actual contact with my robe, and with this observation there suddenly came over my spirit all the keen, collected calmness of despair. For the first time during many hours—or perhaps days—I thought. It now occurred to me that the bandage, or surcingle, which enveloped me, was unique. I was tied by no separate cord. The first stroke of the razor-like crescent athwart any portion of the band, would so detach it that it might be unwound from my person by means of my left hand. But how fearful, in that case, the proximity of the steel! The result of the slightest struggle, how deadly! Was it likely, moreover, that the minions of the torturer had not foreseen and provided for this possibility? Was it probable that the bandage crossed my bosom in the track of the pendulum? Dreading to find my faint, and, as it seemed, my last, hope frustrated, I so far elevated my head as to obtain a distinct view of my breast. The surcingle enveloped my limbs and body close in all directions, save in the path of the destroying crescent.

Scarcely had I dropped my head back into its original position, when there flashed upon my mind what I cannot better describe than as the unformed half of that idea of deliverance to which I have previously alluded, and of which a moiety only floated indeterminately through my brain when I raised food to my burning lips. The whole thought was now present—feeble, scarcely sane, scarcely definite—but still entire. I proceeded at once, with the nervous energy of despair, to attempt its execution.

For many hours the immediate vicinity of the low frame-

work upon which I lay had been literally swarming with rats. They were wild, bold, ravenous—their red eyes glaring upon me as if they waited but for motionlessness on my part to make me their prey. “To what food,” I thought, “have they been accustomed in the well?”

They had devoured, in spite of all my efforts to prevent them, all but a small remnant of the contents of the dish. I had fallen into an habitual see-saw or wave of the hand about the platter; and, at length, the unconscious uniformity of the movement deprived it of effect. In their voracity the vermin thoroughly rubbed the bandage wherever I could reach it; particles of the oily and spicy viand which now remained I thoroughly rubbed the bandage wherever I could reach it; then, raising my hand from the floor, I lay breathlessly still.

At first the ravenous animals were startled and terrified at the change—at the cessation of movement. They shrank alarmedly back—many sought the well; but this was only for a moment. I had not counted in vain upon their voracity. Observing that I remained without motion, one or two of the boldest leaped upon the frame-work and smelt at the surcingle. This seemed the signal for a general rush. Forth from the well they hurried in fresh troops. They clung to the wood, they overran it, and leaped in hundreds upon my person. The measured movement of the pendulum disturbed them not at all. Avoiding its strokes they busied themselves with the anointed bandage. They pressed, they swarmed upon me in ever-accumulating heaps. They writhed upon my throat; their cold lips sought my own. I was half-stified by their thronging pressure; disgust, for which the world has no name, swelled my bosom and chilled, with a heavy clamminess, my heart. Yet one minute and I felt that the struggle would be over. Plainly I perceived the loosening of the bandage. I knew that in more than one place it must be already severed. With a more than human resolution I lay still.

Nor had I erred in my calculations—nor had I endured in vain. I at length felt that I was free. The surcingle hung in ribbons from my body. But the stroke of the pendulum already pressed upon my bosom. It had divided the serge of the robe. It had cut through the linen beneath. Twice again it swung, and a sharp sense of pain shot through every nerve. But the moment of escape had arrived. At a wave of my hand my deliverers hurried tumultuously away. With a steady movement—cautious, sidelong, shrinking and slow—I slid

from the embrace of the bandage and beyond the reach of the cimiter. For the moment, at least, I was free.

Free! and in the grasp of the Inquisition! I had scarcely stepped from my wooden bed of horror upon the stone floor of the prison when the motion of the hellish machine ceased, and I beheld it drawn up, by some invisible force, through the ceiling. This was a lesson which I took desperately to heart. My every motion was undoubtedly watched. Free! I had but escaped death in one form of agony to be delivered unto worse than death in some other. With that thought I rolled my eyes nervously around on the barriers of iron that hemmed me in. Something unusual—some change which, at first, I could not appreciate distinctly—it was obvious, had taken place in the apartment. For many minutes of a dreamy and trembling abstraction, I busied myself in vain, unconnected conjecture. During this period I became aware, for the first time, of the origin of the sulphurous light which illumined the cell. It proceeded from a fissure, about half an inch in width, extending entirely around the prison at the base of the walls, which thus appeared, and were completely separated from the floor. I endeavored, but of course in vain, to look through the aperture.

As I arose from the attempt the mystery of the alteration in the chamber broke at once upon my understanding. I have observed that, although the outlines of the figures upon the walls were sufficiently distinct, yet the colors seemed blurred and indefinite. These colors had now assumed, and were momentarily assuming, a startling and most intense brilliancy, that gave to the spectral and fiendish portraitures an aspect that might have thrilled even firmer nerves than my own. Demon eyes, of a wild and ghastly vivacity, glared upon me in a thousand directions, where none had been visible before, and gleamed with the lurid lustre of a fire that I could not force my imagination to regard as unreal.

Unreal! Even while I breathed there came to my nostrils the breath of the vapor of heated iron! A suffocating odor pervaded the prison! A deeper glow settled each moment in the eyes that glared at my agonies! A richer tint of crimson diffused itself over the pictured horrors of blood. I panted. I gasped for breath. There could be no doubt of the design of my tormentors—oh, most unrelenting! oh, demoniac of men! I shrank from the glowing metal to the centre of the cell. Amid the thought of the fiery destruction that impended the

idea of the coolness of the well came over my soul like balm. I rushed to its deadly brink. I threw my straining vision below. The glare from the enkindled roof illumined its inmost recesses. Yet, for a wild moment did my spirit refuse to comprehend the meaning of what I saw. At length it forced—it wrestled its way into my soul—it burned itself in upon my shuddering reason. Oh, for a voice to speak! Oh, horror! oh, any horror but this! With a shriek I rushed from the margin and buried my face in my hands—weeping bitterly.

The heat rapidly increased, and once again I looked up, shuddering as with a fit of the ague. There had been a second change in the cell—and now the change was obviously in the form. As before, it was in vain that I at first endeavored to appreciate or understand what was taking place. But not long was I left in doubt. The inquisitorial vengeance had been hurried by my twofold escape, and there was to be no more dallying with the King of Terrors. The room had been square. I saw that two of its iron angles were now acute, two, consequently obtuse. The fearful difference quickly increased, with a low rumbling or moaning sound. In an instant the apartment had shifted its form into that of a lozenge. But the alteration stopped not here—I neither hoped nor desired it to stop. I could have clasped the red walls to my bosom as a garment of eternal peace. "Death," I said, "any death but that of the pit!" Fool! might I not have known that into the pit it was the object of the burning iron to urge me? Could I resist its glow? or, if even that, could I withstand its pressure? And now, flatter and flatter grew the lozenge, with a rapidity that left me no time for contemplation. Its centre, and, of course, its greatest width, came just over the yawning gulf. I shrank back, but the closing walls pressed me resistlessly onward. At length, for my seared and writhing body, there was no longer an inch of foothold on the firm floor of the prison. I struggled no more, but the agony of my soul found vent in one loud, long, and final scream of despair. I felt that I tottered upon the brink—I averted my eyes——

There was a discordant hum of human voices! There was a loud blast as of many trumpets! There was a harsh grating as of a thousand thunders. The fiery walls rushed back. An outstretched arm caught my own as I fell, fainting, into the abyss. It was that of General Lasalle. The French army had entered Toledo. The Inquisition was in the hands of its enemies.

Anecdotes.

IN this department of short stories about people, compiled from various sources and contributed, an annual subscription to Short Stories will be given each month for the best original or selected anecdote sent in by any contributor. The Editor cannot undertake to return contributions or engage in correspondence over them. If the extract is valuable keep a copy of it. Communications should be marked "Anecdotes," care The Current Literature Publishing Co., Bryant Building, 55 Liberty St., New York, and should be signed with name or initials.

A Soft Answer.

An old Scotch woman was famous for speaking kindly. No sheep was so dark but she could discover some white spot to point out to those who could see only its blackness.

One day, a gossiping neighbor lost patience with her, and said angrily, "Wumman, ye'll hae a guid word to say for the Deevil himsel'!"

Instantly came the reply, "Weel, he's a verra industreous body." V. D.

(In accordance with our offer, the subscription to Short Stories for one year has been awarded to Mary T. Van Denburgh, Box 354, Los Gatos, California, for the foregoing, the best anecdote contributed during the month.)

How He Seated His Guests.

Years ago the temperance lecturer, Mr. John B. Gough, was to speak in Baltimore. In those days there were no reserved seats; it was "Come first, served first." A certain Mr. P—— was giving a dinner party, during which the subject of the lecture was spoken of. The host suggested all going, but there was some demur to that, as they would not go early, neither would they stand. Mr. P—— replied that if they would all promise to go he would have seats for them, to which they assented, Mr. P—— going in advance chose the two first rows in the middle aisle. As the people came up to take the seats, he said, most suavely: "Gentlemen and ladies, walk right in, these seats are reserved for the reformed drunkards." It is needless to say that when his house-party arrived

the places were vacant, and they enjoyed to the fullest the quick-wittedness of their friend and host. M. E. B.

The Restriction Removed.

The will of Stephen Girard provided that no clergyman should ever be allowed to enter the splendid Girard College at Philadelphia.

One day a very clerical looking man, with immaculate white cravat and choker, approached the entrance.

"You can't come in here," said the janitor.

"The —— I can't!" said the stranger. "Oh," said the janitor, "excuse me. Step right in."

The visitor, by the way, was the late State Senator Sessions, of Western New York. J. B. KING.

A Curious Commendation.

The pastor of the Baptist church in our town had agreed to say a few words to the colored brethren. The colored divine presented him to the congregation with quite a lengthy speech, which wound up something like this:

"Brethren, our white brother will now speak to you on the subject, 'Every-day Religion,' and I assure you he appreciates your obstacles. His face is white, but it ain't that that counts. He's got as black a heart as any of you."

K. P. B.

Tyranny.

A southern planter went to New Orleans several months after General But-

ANECDOTES—Continued.

ler had taken the reins in his hands and acquired a reputation for "tyranny."

One of the first things he saw was the placards of a gentleman's furnishing store posted on the walls and fences: "Get your shirts at Moody's."

The planter saw it again and again, and mused deeply upon it.

"It's another of Butler's orders," he said to himself. "He's probably a partner in the concern, and what he says 'goes,' so I suppose it's best to submit. I don't need any shirts, and it's a shame to be compelled to buy 'em now; but I don't want any more trouble."

He accordingly went to Moody's and bought half a dozen shirts, on compulsion.

DAISY POTUT.

The Family Trait.

Daniel O'Connell, the great Irish orator, when taking a ride in the neighborhood of his house, had occasion to ask an urchin to open a gate for him. The little fellow complied with much alacrity, and looked up with such an honest pleasure at rendering the slight service, that O'Connell, by way of saying something—anything, asked: "What's your name, my boy?" "Daniel O'Connell, sir," replied he, stoutly. "And who's your father?" demanded the astonished liberator. "Daniel O'Connell, sir." O'Connell muttered a word or two under his breath, and then added aloud: "When I see you again I'll give you a sixpence." Riding briskly on he soon forgot the incident, and fell to thinking of graver matters, when, after travelling some miles, he found his path obstructed by some fallen timber, which a boy was stoutly endeavoring to remove. On looking more closely, he discovered it to be the same boy he had met in the morning. "What!" cried he, "how do you come to be here, now?" "You said, sir, the next time you seen me you'd give me sixpence," said the little fellow wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"Here it is," said Daniel; you are my son—never a doubt of it."

MRS. J. F. MOUNTAIN.

Reassured.

The practicing physician has an opportunity to see and meet all sorts and conditions of men. An anecdote that deserves repetition occurred in a Celtic community, and was related by my father.

He was called to treat a man suffering with an ulcerated leg. One morning when he came to dress the limb he found that the dressing had been tampered with, and suspected that some of the coterie of old women who gather at houses where "throuble" prevails had been suggesting treatment.

He turned to the man's wife and said: "Hereafter, I don't want any tampering with this man's dressings. If I find any more evidence of old women's 'quacking' I'll give up the case."

"Rest aisy, docthor; rest aisy! Sorra the quack will touch the leg after this but yourself."

JOHN A. FOOTE.

An Insurance Joke Variant.

A Jew, whose store had been burned out several times, applied one day to an insurance company for insurance. The company took the risk on the condition that hand grenades were to be placed throughout his store, which was agreed upon.

Several days afterward a friend visited him and noticing them asked him what they were. "De insurance company tolds me to put dem in," said Mr. Cohn. "Vat vas in dem?" Mr. Isaacs asked. "I don't know vat *vas* in dem, but I put coal oil in dem."

LEO MUND.

Suffrage Refused.

When Staté Senator William Flinn, of Pennsylvania, was a candidate for office for the first time, a friend who



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ANECDOTES—Continued.

was working for his election had an amusing experience with an old Irishman in one of the Pittsburg wards. Senator Flinn is well known in his native city as the junior partner in the contracting firm of Booth & Flinn.

The Senator's supporter started in to talk at great length about the good qualities of the candidate. The old Irishman puffed away at his pipe in silence, shaking his head all the while, but at last he could stand it no longer.

"Begorra, an' I wouldn't vote for him," he said. "Why, he's the man that assassinated Lincoln!"

"Why, you don't know what you're talking about! It was Booth that killed Lincoln," replied Senator Flinn's supporter.

"Well, I knowed it was wan o' thim two divils," replied the Irishman, "an' I wouldn't vote for ayther!"

The Senator's friend went away in disgust, seeing it was useless to do any more talking. H. L.

Embarrassing for His Amanuensis.

One day on Edisto, a sea island near Charleston, S. C., "Da Hucky," an old negro, approached me with the unusual request that I write a letter for him.

After getting paper and pen, I said: "Well, Hucky, to whom shall I write?"

"To my gal, Missie."

"What shall I tell her?"

Hucky twisted his huge frame uneasily. "Wal, Missie, I dunno ezzackly—just say 'notwithstanding.'"

Having written a few lines in which I worked in the desired word, I asked, "What next, Hucky?"

"Wal, Missie, just tell her 'scuse bad spellin' and riten." E. M. R.

The Atmosphere of the Sunday Newspaper.

One of the bravest, as well as one of the wittiest, things that has been done lately, was the reply of the Rev. Dr. Newman Smyth, of New Haven, when

the representative of one of the worst of modern newspapers asked him for "a bright, terse interview about hell," for its Sunday edition. Dr. Smyth very kindly complied with the request; his article was as follows: "Hell, in my opinion, is the place where the Sunday edition of your paper should be published and circulated." L. A. B.

Two Kinds of Blind Tigers.

Bonham was a prohibition town, but, notwithstanding the vigilance of her officers, there were several low dives in the town where whisky was sold, and these places were termed by the prohibitionists, "blind 'igers." One sultry summer afternoon, being at leisure, I concluded to see for myself what truth there was in the "blind tiger" statement; so I sauntered leisurely along down North Main street, where they were said to exist. I had not gone very far when I met two little negro boys coming up the street very much frightened. One had a baseball bat, and the other had a brick. I stopped them and inquired into their troubles, and the boy with the bat said, "Mister, yo' better not go by dat house wid de big horn over de doah." "Why?" I asked. "Why, boss, haint yo' done hearn 'bout de tiger? De parson tole us all 'bout hit las' night. He said dat de tiger sho am in dat house, 'n' I knows it 'cause I'se done hearn him growls." "So's me," said the little coon with the brick. "Well," said I, "tigers don't like white men so I'm in no trouble." "Better not go by dar, Mister, 'cause dis is a 'blind tiger,' an' he can't tell 'bout yo' bein' white." WILL H. EVANS.

The Gratitude of Snakes.

One day some twenty odd years ago, while out hunting in the woods near Kickapoo Creek, I found a large rattlesnake lying torpid. It was a cold day and I passed him by, noticing that he had nine rattles. Soon afterward



THE NIGHTINGALE'S NEST*

BY THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

A FAIR park surrounded the castle, birds from every clime had made this park their home. In the springtime they held wonderful concerts there. Every leaf concealed a nest, every tree was bursting with music. The blackbirds chirped and the nightingales trilled and warbled their joyous songs.

But within the castle there were two fair maidens who sang even more sweetly than the birds without, in the park. If you had seen Fleurette and Isabeau on Sundays, dressed in their splendid robes, but for the snowy whiteness of their shoulders you would have mistaken them for angels. And when they

*Translated by Elmer Schlesinger, from the French, for Short Stories. Illustrations by Helen Maitland Armstrong.

sang the old Sire Maulevrier, their uncle, would sometimes hold their hands, fearful lest the fancy take them to soar away into the blue heavens.

They lived retired from the world with only Valentine, the little flaxen-haired page, and the old Sire Maulevrier for companions. Their lives passed along in the gentle poetic occupations of maidens, feeding the birds in the park, tending their



flowers and studying the masters. They kept afar from the eyes of the world. But neither the nightingales nor the rose can remain concealed. Their song and their perfume betray them.

So the world sought them. Dukes and princes came to claim their hands from the Sire Maulevrier. But the maidens would not hear of it, and sent them away again. Perhaps they

felt by some mysterious instinct that it was their mission in this world to remain spotless virgins and to sing.

When but mere children they had come to the manor house. Their window opened upon the park so that many a time the song of the birds had lulled them to sleep. Old Blondian, the bard, had taught them to play on the ivory keys of the spinnet, almost before they had learned to walk. It had been their only plaything. So they had learned to sing almost before they could speak, and they sang as freely as others breathed the air.

They lived in the realms of music. To them the rustling of the leaves, the rippling of the brook, the chimes of the cathedral, the wind sobbing in the chimney, the droning of the spinning wheel, the raindrops beating against the window-panes were exquisite harmonies. They cared for nothing in all the broad, wide world but music, unless, indeed, it were Valentine and their flowers—Valentine, because he was so like the roses; the roses, because they were like Valentine.

Their greatest pleasure was to sing from their window, in the evening, the songs which they had composed during the day. Celebrated masters came from afar to listen to them. And, in truth, it was music so soft and melodious that the cherubims of heaven came to the window and learned it by heart, afterward to sing it for the good God.

One evening in May the two cousins were singing a duet. Never before had they sung so well. A nightingale from the park, perched upon a rosebush, was listening to them attentively. When the duet was finished he flew to the window and, in his own sweet nightingale language, challenged them to a singing contest. The maidens accepted the challenge and bade him begin.

The nightingale's little throat swelled, his wings fluttered, his whole body trembled. His voice swelled loud and clear into the cool evening air. It was a soft, melodious song, with charming trills and pearly cadences—one would almost have thought his voice had wings. And when he stopped, sure of having won the victory, the two maidens sang. Better than ever before they sang. The nightingale's song, compared to theirs, seemed like the chirping of a sparrow.

Again the nightingale tried. He sang a mournful love song that ended with one supreme chord, far beyond the range of human voice. Fleurette and Isabeau softly turned the pages

of their music, and when they sang again Saint Cecilia, who was listening to them up in heaven, grew pale with jealousy.

The nightingale made one last, supreme effort. But the contest had exhausted him—his breath failed him, his feathers stood erect, his eyes closed in spite of him—he was dying!

"I have lost," he murmured to the maidens, "and it has cost me dear, for I am dying. I leave a nest with three little ones in it—the third sweetbriar bush on the road leading to the



lake. Bring them up for me, and teach them to sing as only you can sing," and with that he died.

For a long time they mourned him, for they loved his sweet music. Then they called Valentine, the little page with golden hair, and told him where the nest was. And Valentine, who was a mischievous little rogue, easily found the place. He put the nest in his bosom and carried it safely back to the castle. Fleurette and Isabeau awaited him impatiently, leaning over the balcony.

The maidens took pity on the poor little orphans, and tended them most carefully. And when they had grown a little older, they taught them how to sing, as they promised to the dying nightingale.

It was wonderful to see how tame they were and how well they sang. They would fly about the room, and perch now



on Isabeau's shoulders, now on Fleurette's head, singing most beautifully all the while.

The two cousins retired more and more from the world. Sometimes in the evening the fresh breezes wafted supernatural melodies from their room. The nightingales would take their part in the concert, for they had learned to sing almost as well as their mistresses.

The maidens grew thinner and thinner. The rosy freshness of their cheeks began to fade away. They were pale

now, and almost transparent. Only when they sang a bright red spot burned on their cheeks; but it disappeared again as soon as they stopped, leaving them pale and trembling. In vain the Sire Maulevrier urged them to stop.

Their singing became more and more beautiful each day. Nothing like it had ever been heard in this world. It was easy for any one to see that the music was slowly breaking its frail instruments.

The maidens even felt this themselves, and for a time gave up their singing.

But one night the window was open, the birds were singing in the park, and the breeze was stirring gently. There was so much music in the air that almost of one accord they started to sing. It was the song of the swan, a wonderful song, full of mournful passages, and rising to heights inaccessible to the human voice. As they sang the red spots in their cheeks grew larger and larger. The three nightingales looked at them and listened to them with a singular anxiety. They beat their wings and flew about restlessly.

The two cousins arrived at the last chord of the piece. Their voices rose to a strange melody that was no longer of this world. The two maidens had died. Their souls had departed with the last note.

The nightingales flew straight to heaven to carry that wonderful song to the good Lord, who kept them all three in paradise to sing for Him the music of the two cousins.

And later God made those three nightingales into the souls of Palestrina, Cimarosa and the Chevalier Gluck.





THE SPECIFIC VIOLIN

BY ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN



KARL HAFITZ had spent six years on the method of counterpoint. He had studied Hayden, Gluck, Mozart, Beethoven, Rossini. He rejoiced in flourishing health and a modest income that permitted him to follow his artistic vocation; in a word, he possessed all that was necessary to compose great and beautiful music, except that little indispensable thing called inspiration.

Each day, full of noble enthusiasm, he bore to his beloved master, Albert Kilian, long scores full of harmony, but each phrase was like that of Peter, or John, or Christopher.

Master Albert, seated in his great armchair, with his feet on the andirons and his elbow resting on the corner of the table, always smoking his long pipe, applied himself to scratching out, one after another, these singular revelations in his pupil. Karl wept with rage, became angry, argued; but the old master quietly opened one of his innumerable music books, and putting his finger on the passage, said:

"Look at this, my lad!" Then Karl bowed his head and despaired of the future.

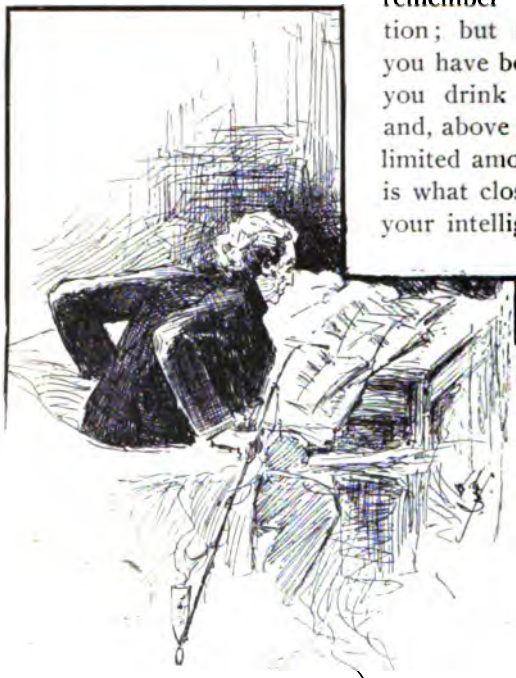
But one fine morning when he had presented under his name, to Master Albert, a fantasie of Baccherini, with variations by Vioth, the good man, until then impassive, became angry.

"Karl!" shouted he, "do you take me for an ass? Do you think I cannot detect your disgraceful thieving? This is truly too much!"

*Translated by Keokee Monroe, from the French, for Short Stories. Illustrations by L. de Bernebrück.

And seeing the consternation caused by his reproach:

"Listen to me; I am perfectly willing to admit that you have been the dupe of your memory, and that you take what you



remember for pure invention; but it is very evident you have become too gross—you drink too much wine and, above all, you eat an unlimited amount of meat. That is what closes the avenues of your intelligence. You ought to starve yourself."

"To starve myself!"

"Yes; or renounce music. You have no lack of science, but simply of ideas, that's all. If you spend your life covering the strings of your violin with a layer of

fat, how can they vibrate?" These words of Master Albert's were like a ray of light to Hafitz.

"Then I ought to make myself thin?" cried he. "I will not turn back from such a sacrifice. And then if matter oppresses my soul, I will starve myself to death!"

His face at this moment expressed so much heroism that Master Albert was truly touched. He embraced his dear pupil and wished him every success.

Then on the following day Karl Hafitz, with his knapsack on his back and his staff in hand, left the "Three Pigeons" inn and the brew-house of "King Gambrinus" to go on a long journey.

He turned his face toward Switzerland.

Unluckily, at the end of six weeks, although his weight was greatly reduced, the inspiration would not come.

"Is it possible for any one to be more unhappy than I?" he

said to himself. "Neither fasting nor good cheer, neither water nor wine, nor beer, can show my spirit the diapason of the sublime. What have I done that I should merit so sad a fate? Whereas, such a crowd of ignoramuses produce remarkable compositions, I, with all my science, all my work, and all my courage, I attain nothing. Ah, God is not just; no, He is not just!" With reasonings of this sort he followed the road from Bruck to Freiburg. Night approached: he slowly dragged one foot after the other, and felt ready to fall from fatigue.

Just then he saw in the dim moonlight an old ruin, with creeping roof and door unswung, half hidden, back from the road. The chimney was a heap of ruins, and the tall nettles and briars interlaced around the broken windows, as if Nature strove to conceal decay. The dormer window of the gable barely overlooked the heather-covered plain, where whistled a gale strong enough to blow the horns off the cattle. Karl saw, too, through the gloom, a branch of fir waving above the door. "Oh," said he to himself, "this ruin is not attractive; it is really somewhat sinister-looking, but it is not well to judge by the external appearance."

And without further hesitation he rapped with his staff on the door.

"Who's there? What's wanted?" said a rude voice from the inside.

"A shelter and food."

"Oh, well, let's see!"

The door opened suddenly, and Karl found himself confronted by a sturdy-looking man, with a square face, gray eyes, shoulders covered by a great coat out at elbows, and a hacking knife in his hand. Behind this singular person shone the flames from a fireplace, lighting the entrance to a loft, the steps of a wooden stairway and the decrepit walls. Under the flickering light of a flame he saw a young girl, pale and feeble,



dressed in a cheap gown of brown cotton dotted with white. She looked toward the door with a frightened air. Her black eyes had an expression of sadness and undefinable wildness.

Karl saw all this in the twinkling of an eye, and instinctively clutched his staff.

"Well, come in," said the man; "this is no time to keep anyone outside."

Then feeling that it would be ill-timed to appear frightened Karl walked into the middle of the hut and seated himself on a stool before the hearth.

"Give me your staff and sack," said the man.

For an instant Master Albert's pupil shivered to the marrow of his bones; but the sack was unbuckled, the staff stood in the corner, and the host seated tranquilly near the hearth, before he had recovered from his surprise.

This circumstance made him more calm.

"Sir innkeeper," said he smiling, "I will not be sorry to have my supper."

"What do you wish for supper?" said his host gravely.

"A fried omelet, a jug of wine and some cheese."

"Ho, ho, ho! Indeed, sir, you have brought a good appetite; but our provisions are exhausted."

"Exhausted?"

"Yes."

"All?"

"All."

"You have no cheese?"

"No."

"No butter?"

"No."

"No bread, no milk?"

"No."

"But, great heavens! what have you, then?"

"Potatoes baked in the ashes."

But just then Karl saw in the shadow, on the steps of the stairway, a whole regiment of fowls—white, black and red, some asleep with head under wing, others with their necks drawn in between their shoulders. There was

one miserably tall, thin, shriveled, haggard fowl that combed and plumed itself with great nonchalance.



"But," said Hafitz, pointing, "you ought to have eggs."

"We carried them this morning to the market of Bruck."

"Oh, but then, cost what it may, put a fowl on the spit!"

No sooner had he pronounced these words than the girl turned pale, flung back her hair and threw herself before the stairway, crying:

"No one shall touch my fowls—no one shall touch my fowls. Oh, do you not know we must permit the creatures of the good God to live?"

The appearance of this unhappy creature was something so terrible that Hafitz hastened to say:

"No, no; no one shall kill the fowls. Let us see the potatoes. I will apply myself solely to the potatoes. I will leave you no more! From this hour my vocation is clearly shown. It is here that I shall remain three months — six months — the length of time necessary to become as thin as a fakir."

He expressed himself with such singular animation that his host called to the pale young girl:

"Genevieve! Genevieve! look at him; this one is like the other."

The north wind on the outside redoubled its fury; the fire on the hearth eddied and whirled and writhed under a thick grayish smoke. The fowls, in the reflection of the firelight, seemed to dance on the small boards of the stairway, whereat the crazy woman began to sing a weird, old air, and the pile of green wood, sobbing in the middle of the fire, accompanied her with plaintive sighs.

Hafitz understood that he had fallen into the den of the Sorcerer Hecker. He hungrily devoured two potatoes, lifted the big, red jug full of water to his lips, and drank deep draughts. Then peace returned to his soul. He saw that the



girl had disappeared and only the man remained in front of the fire, wrapped in deep thought.

"Mine host, lead me to bed."

The innkeeper then lighting a lamp, climbed slowly up the worm-eaten stairway. He lifted with his gray head the heavy trap-door and conducted Charles through the loft, under the thatch.



"See, there is your bed," said he, putting the lamp on the floor. "Sleep well, and, above all, guard against fire."



Then he went down, and Hafitz, left alone, doubled up on a great straw pallet, and covered

himself with a large sack of feathers.

He reflected for some time, and asked himself if it was prudent to go to sleep, for the face of the old man seemed so evil; then, recalling his clear gray eyes, his bluish mouth encircled with deep wrinkles, his broad, bony forehead, with its yellowish tinge, he all at once remembered that on the Golgenburg three hanged men were found, and that one of them strongly resembled his host. That he, too, had hollow, deep-set eyes, was out at elbows, and that the great toe of his left foot was out of his shoe and chapped by the rain. He remembered that the most miserable looking one, called Melchior, had once been a musician, and that he had been hung for murdering with a jug the innkeeper of the "Golden Sheep," who had reminded him that he must pay his little score.

The music of this poor devil had been at times profoundly touching. It was unusual, fantastic, and this pupil of Master Albert's envied the bohemian; then, suddenly, Karl seemed again to see the figure on the gibbet, its tattered garments blown back and forth by the winds of the night, and the crows circling round and round with great clamor. He felt his hair stand on end, and his fear was greatly increased, when peering through the gloom he saw at the far end of the loft, leaning against the wall, a violin, with two faded palms on top of it. Karl longed to flee, when the rude voice of his host again struck his ear.

"Blow out the light!" he roared. "Go to bed. I told you to guard against fire."

Although these words made Karl shiver with terror, he instantly stretched himself on the straw pallet and blew out the light.

All became silent. In spite of his resolution not to close his eyes, Hafitz slept profoundly. The wind moaned, the night birds called to each other in the darkness, and the mice scampered back and forth over the worm-eaten floor.

Near the hour of daybreak, when Hafitz still slept, he was awakened suddenly by a sharp note of music, full of pain, and so penetrating that a cold sweat covered his face.

He peered forth from his covering, and there under the angle of the roof, he saw the figure of a crouching man. It was Melchior, the man who was hung. His black hair fell down over his fleshless bones, his breast and his neck were bare. He was so thin, that one might have said it was the skeleton of an immense grasshopper. A beautiful moonbeam that came through the dormer window shone sweetly upon him with its bluish light, and disclosed long spider-webs hanging in festoons from the rafters.

Hafitz, silent, eyes wide open, mouth gaping, stared at this strange apparition, as one looks at death hiding behind the curtains of his bed, as the last hour approaches.

All at once the skeleton stretched out his long, fleshless hands and took the violin from its place against the wall. He placed it tenderly against his shoulder, and, after an instant's silence, began to play.

There was in this music funereal tones as the sound of earth falling on the coffin of a loved one—solemn notes like the thunder of waterfalls lengthened by the echoes of the mountains—majestic, like the great winds of autumn in the midst



of the sonorous forest, and sometimes sad notes, sad as hopeless despair.

Then, in the midst of this sobbing, he played a song, light, sweet, silvery, like a flock of gay goldfinches fluttering through the flowery thickets. These graceful trills were twirled with ineffable tremblings of sweetness and joy, only to fly suddenly, frightened by the waltz, soft, low, mad, palpitating—love, joy, despair—all song, all tears—gushed forth pell-mell under his breathing bow.

And Karl, in spite of inexpressible terror, stretched out his arms, and cried:

"Oh, great, great, great artist! Oh, sublime genius! Oh! how I bemoan your sad fate! To be hung! For having



killed a brute of an innkeeper, who knew not a single note of music, to wander through the woods in the moonlight, to have no body and such a beautiful talent—oh, God!"

But as he mourned thus the rough voice of his host interrupted him:

"Hey, up there! Can't you hold your peace until the night's over? Are you ill, or is the house on fire!"

And his heavy steps made the stairway creak, a light shone

through the cracks of the trap-door, which, shoved open by a push of the shoulders, disclosed the innkeeper.

"Oh, mine host, mine host!" cried Hafitz, "what happens here? Just now heavenly music awakened me and carried me to unseen worlds; but it has all vanished like a dream."

The host's face assumed a thoughtful expression.

"Yes, yes," murmured he, like one in a dream, "I was obliged to doubt myself. Melchior still comes to trouble our sleep; he will always return. Now your slumber is lost; it is not worth while for you to try to sleep. Come, get up, comrade; come, smoke a pipe with me."

Karl needed no entreaty. He made haste to go somewhere else; but when he was down below and saw the night was still dark, he sat with his head between his hands, elbows on his knees, for a long, long time, plunged in an abyss of sad meditation.

His host himself came to relight the fire. He had taken his seat on the chair in the ingle nook and smoked in silence.

At last the gray dawn appeared—it peeped through the dull little windows—then the cock crew, and the chickens, one by one, went out.

"How much do I owe you?" asked Charles, buckling his knapsack on his shoulders and taking up his staff.

"You owe us a prayer at the chapel of the Abbey St. Blaise," said his host in a strained voice; "a prayer for my son, the Melchior who was hung—and another for his fiancée—Genevieve, the insane woman."

"That's all?"

"That's all."

"Then farewell. I will not forget."

Really, the first thing Karl did upon arriving at Freiburg was to go and pray to God for the poor Bohemian and for her whom he had loved.

Then he entered an innkeeper's house, "The Grape," spread his manuscript music paper on the table and, having made him bring a bottle of "rikevir," wrote at the head of the title page, "The Spectre's Violin," and composed forthwith his first true and original score.



A LONDON SHOW *

BY ALICE BENTLEY TWITCHELL

‘ ‘**H**ERE, oh, people! this way, see the wonderful Tob-bitt and Tip, the delight of the nobility and gentry! The royal family are the patrons of Tobbitt and Tip! Greatest show on earth, most wonderful thing of the age! Tobbitt, the only human bird; Tip, the greatest freak in the canine world!’

A small crowd gathered on one of the poor streets off Drury Lane. In the centre of the crowd stood a square box draped in gaudy baize and hung with sprightly bells and boughs. On this novel platform was a tallish man dressed in military fashion. His attire was not remarkable for the nicest arrangement, but induced rather the idea that he had slept in it on several preceding nights. It consisted of a brown body coat,

*Written for Short Stories. Illustration by J. R. Connor.

with a great many brass buttons up the front, and pea-green trousers. The coat had once been further adorned by that manner of fastening commonly known as "frogs," but this fact having lost its data was rendered merely supposable by the numerous threads which dangled at regular intervals. The breast was embellished with an outside pocket, from which there peeped a very large and ill-favored handkerchief. The dirty wristbands were pulled down and ostensibly folded back in place of cuffs. The man displayed no gloves, but carried a yellow cane, having at the end a bone hand with a black ball in its grasp. To all these personal advantages may be added a dark ill-conditioned face, and a strong smell of tobacco.

"Come, ye citizens of London! gather round, ye slow moving people! Here stands the delight of the nobility and gentry—the patronized of the royal family!"

Having delivered this oration with a great deal of care, the "delight of the nobility and gentry" suddenly thrust the head of the cane into his mouth, as if to prevent himself from impairing the effect of his speech by adding another word.

The crowd, evidently impressed by their nearness to the patrons of the throne, gathered closer and pressed on all sides so that the military man had some difficulty in descending from his perch and passing about with his hand extended to gather in the pence and ha'pence as a suitable guarantee for the success of the entertainment. Seeming to be but half satisfied on this score, and assuring the people that for no other crowd would he exhibit for so small a recompense, he raised the lid of the erstwhile platform and gave a peculiarly mournful whistle as the signal that the curtain be raised, the foot-lights ablaze, the orchestra in good form, and all was ready for Tobbitt and Tip to appear.

There was a quick flutter of wings, and first a little brown bird, the Tobbitt of the concern, flew out of the box and lighted airily on its master's shoulder, then with a rustle and jingle of bells a dog hopped into the area. He was a tiny creature with long silky hair and a wagging stump of a tail. On his back was tied a square blanket of bright embroidered stuff, and to the edges of this, on both sides, hung little silver bells. A tall pointed cap, embroidered like the blanket, stood over his ears and fastened with a narrow strap under the chin. This was Tip, as the military man announced with

many flourishes, while the dog modestly investigated the feet of the nearest portion of the crowd.

The performance commenced with an initial act of sagacity by Tip. He stood on his hind feet and took his master's cane, which he balanced neatly on his front paws like the veriest drum major, then he walked around to the back of the box and closed the lid by poking it up with the tip of his nose. After this he jumped upon it and gave three sharp barks as a signal that he was ready to be put through his tricks. These were many and varied, and the little dog danced, and sang the scale, and played the tambourine, and died, and woke up, and jumped through rings, and ate scraps of bread off his own nose with a readiness and sense of humor really wonderful. The little bird on the man's shoulder sat quiet all this while, until, at a word, he took his cue and fluttered on to the stage. First he sang, and the dog kept time with the tambourine, which didn't make a very musical combination, to be sure, and proved conclusively that the nobility and gentry did not have a fastidious ear. After this duet little Tobbitt went through some acrobatic performances, such as swinging on a rail and turning somersaults over a miniature trapeze and hanging by his feet to various meshy stuffs, which the master held for the purpose, amid vast applause. At the end of the show came a benediction, as it were. The audience by this time were open-mouthed with astonishment, and showed their appreciation by sundry hunches in each other's sides. The little bird shook his plumage, and, bird-like, plumed his feathers for the last coup.

"Now," said the military man, "ladies and gentlemen, this last act is the special delight of the nobility and gentry. Tobbitt will now say his prayers."

Tobbitt fluttered to his master's outstretched hand, and rolling over on his back, lay motionless with eyes closed and his tiny claws folded on his breast. The dog becomingly bowed his head, and in one spot of London, for just a moment, there was complete quiet. Then, with a flutter, the little bird hopped to his feet, the dog shook his caparisoned sides, the crowd moved away, and the patronized of the royal family stood alone—the richer by a few pennies.

On the outskirts of London, away to the east, stood an inn by the name of "The Jolly Sandboys." A creaky sign hung

from the doorpost, swinging back and forth, and presenting to the eyes of the beholder the alarming spectacle of three bloated specimens of mankind, winding a sinuous and corkscrew way along a path very green as to trees and very red as to sunset. These individuals were represented as being in a state of great intimacy and confidence with each other, as their arms were hooked together, and the end-men each held upraised a huge bumper of foaming ale, with which they seemed to be engaged in toasting the middle man.

The landlord was leaning lazily out of the window watching the rain, which was falling heavily, when he saw coming along the road a tall military man, wearing his hat low on his brow, and carrying at his back a square box draped gaudily in baize and making a jingling noise of bells with each step the man took. The landlord recognizing in the man a possible customer, darted in to the bar to stir the fire and set nearer the blaze a huge iron caldron which bubbled and simmered and sent an unctuous steam out into the air. Then the landlord darted back to the front door and encountered the man just coming in.

"All alone?" asked the man, putting down his burden.

"All alone, as yet," replied the landlord, looking at the sky, "but we shall have more company to-night." So saying he led the way into the bar, where the fire was dancing and glowing and sending out a ruddy blush over the room.

The landlord hastened to the iron caldron, and raising the lid suffered the delicious steam to tickle the nostrils of his guest. When he did this the man's heart was touched, and he sat down in the chimney corner and smiled.

"What is it?" he murmured, drawing the back of his hand across his mouth.

"It's a stew of tripe," said the landlord, smacking his lips, and taking a long whiff of the fragrance that was floating about. The man took a whiff, too, and ordered a pint of warm ale to be brought to him immediately. Softened by the soothing beverage, he bethought himself of the rain which was rattling against the windows and pouring down in torrents, and such was his extreme amiability that he more than once expressed the hope that the poor devils who were out in the weather might not get wet.

Now and again the door opened and other travelers entered, very wet and more or less sulky. But fire and soup are

great equalizers of men's tempers, and by the time the coals had been stirred and the contents of the caldron emptied into a huge tureen, frowns gave way to smiles and a merrier company it would have been hard to find than that which was gathered in the bar of "The Jolly Sandboys."

At this junction Tip raised the lid of his box with his stubby nose, and shaking his bells gaily, hopped out among the guests. Little Tobbitt followed, fluttering to his master's shoulder and nestling lovingly in his neck. This addition to the party occasioned a great outburst of applause, and Tip, highly flattered, went through his tricks. A stoutish man by the name of Brass, with wiry black hair and an expression of face not unlike the useful metal for which he was named, raised a loud shout as the dog doffed his sprightly cap in recognition of his enthusiastic reception. The bird then came in for his share of attention, and the master, inspired by the mellowing influence of warm ale, thought it would be a most exquisite satire for Tobbitt to say his prayers as a sort of grace over the convivial board.

There were four men enjoying the hospitalities of "The Jolly Sandboys"—one was Mr. Brass, before mentioned; another, Mr. Swinedig, his friend, who was slender of stature and pale of face, with an eye focused into something between a squint and a cast, so that in whatever direction you thought he was not looking in that very place was his vision centred; and whenever you deemed yourself the object of his glance, then indeed were you most free from observation. His lean frame betokened an absence of all active and revivifying processes, but on looking higher you found that the passions commonly distributed through the body were contracted in his nose, which delicate organ glowed with never-abating fire. The showman and the host himself completed the gay quartet.

"How do you sell that there dog?" asked Mr. Brass, edging toward Tip with an insinuating leer.

"I don't sell him," answered the military man, as he put his hand over Tip, who crept timidly between his feet. "I ain't a sellin' my real estate, thank'ee."

"Hoh! I should think them there animals would be called personal property, shouldn't you, Swinedig, eh?" giving that gentleman a hunch in the rib, thereby showing his sense of humor and his knowledge of human anatomy at one and the same time.

"If asking an opinion of the law, and that means me, who am nothing if not a limb, and a long limb and a strong limb," answered Mr. Swinedig, "I should say, being applied to and meaning no offense to none, that animals, both vertebrate and caviniferous, was personal property."

Here the limb of the law looked very hard at the opposite side of the room, whereupon the other gentleman knew at once that they were under the sternest scrutiny.

"I don't care," answered the military man surlily, "whether you're a limb or a branch or a whole tree. These animals are my real estate, and they aren't transferable, neither."

The host, feeling that a damper had been placed upon the conviviality of the occasion, sought to remove it by the softening effect of music, and after placing his voice at a suitable pitch, assured the company that his heart was on a desert plain, and all he needed was his Arab steed in order to perform great deeds of valor and chivalry.

During this happy diversion Mr. Brass and his friend drew apart, and after sundry sly winks and nods and frequent punches in the side, they seemed to decide some matter of great moment between themselves.

The military man was nodding in his chair, with the little Tobbitt nestling in his neck and the faithful Tip asleep in an angle of his arm, when Mr. Brass insinuatingly accosted him with the proposition of a friendly round at cards. This effectually aroused the nodding master, and stirred in him a sleeping passion, which, alas! has been roused but too often, and has played as sad a part in many a life as the part it played in that of which this little story tells.

Mr. Brass and Mr. Swinedig took their places against mine host and the master, and the cards fell thick and fast. Tobbitt fluttered timidly from one shoulder of his master to the other, while Tip sat on his hind legs beside the master's chair, holding the yellow cane and looking up with reproachful eyes under his peaked cap.

The little pile of money lessened and lessened under the showman's fingers, and his face grew feverish and wild. Mr. Brass glanced up at him now and then and gave him an occasional nod or smile, combining playfulness with patronage.

Finally the last penny was gone, and poor Tobbitt and Tip had done their tricks and sung and danced for naught.

The master started up with a wild look. "More," he cried, "more, lend me some money, for God's sake."

Mr. Brass looked at his friend Swinedig and, happening to catch his eye when it was cast in a direction diametrically opposite from his own, gained from that lively source the information that now was the time to speak.

"I'll lend you money, as much as you like," he said to the master. "It wouldn't do to spoil this pleasant evening for the lack of a little money. Always fan the flame of conviviality with the wing of friendship, is my motto. Only, friend," and here his voice dropped to a seductive whisper, "just to insure myself—to insure the wing of friendship from moulting a feather, I'll take them two animals as security," and he put his hand greedily toward the dog. Tip, angry at the motion, gave a short bark and shook his peaked cap defiantly. Little Tobbitt, startled, nestled closer in the master's neck.

The master looked up at Mr. Brass and drew back.

"I said that that there real estate warn't transferable, didn't I? and what I says I says, and what I means I means."

"Security, sir, security," murmured Mr. Brass, rubbing his hands. "You'll beat this next round, sure. Come, don't stop the game. Swinedig, deal."

Swinedig dealt. The cards fell in front of the master—he hesitated and was lost. Before taking up his hand he nestled the bird closer against his cheek and pressed the dog to his side.

"It's for your sakes, little comrades," he whispered. "I'll right ye yet; never fear, I'll right ye yet."

The little bird fluttered on to the table, and there, by the side of the master's cards, rolled over on his back and folded his little claws on his breast. The master hesitated once more, but his hand was too near the cards, and the fever mounted in his blood.

"It's all for you, Tobbitt," he whispered, as he pushed the bird away. "I'll right ye yet."

Thus repulsed, Tobbitt flew to the dog and perched on his high peaked cap. Then the two, with an animal's instinct of coming danger, traveled together toward the corner of the room, where they crouched motionless.

The four men bent over the table intent and watchful. The master's face was so twisted with repressed passion that he looked like a wild panther on the scent. Mine host tumbled

his hair and worked his mouth up and down in the liveliest spasms, proving that if gaming with him was not an unusual pastime, it was at least an exciting one. Mr. Brass glanced about with a sleek smile, and the metal of the andirons was not more cold or expressionless than the features of his own face, while Mr. Swinedig cast his eyes about in all directions at once, with a freedom of action quite refreshing.

The last hand was dealt, and the master clutched the tiny pile of money yet remaining to him. He looked at his cards and jumped to his feet with a loud cry :

"I'll right ye yet, Tobbitt ; I'll right ye yet."

Then calling the bet he triumphantly threw his cards down, face up. He held the ace, queen, jack, seven and two-spot of hearts.

Brass turned up two pairs. Mine host held a straight of four, headed by ten, on which his hopes had been built to win. Swinedig shut one eye in an attitude of mock disappointment and chagrin, and turned his cards up slowly one by one. The master bent double over the table with his face almost touching Swinedig's hand. First a five-spot. Ha ! not much to fear ! Another five-spot—a pair and a low one at that—next a nine-spot—another nine-spot—two pairs, but not so good as Brass' pair. "My, what an easy beat !" and his long fingers went out toward the pile of money in the centre of the table ; but Swinedig stopped him with a grasp of iron as he turned up his last card and whispered in his ear :

"Go easy, you fool, the dog and bird are mine !"

There was another five.

The master stared about him in dumb terror for a second, and then a spasm of blind rage came over him.

"Give me my pets !" he cried. "Give them to me, I say. You've fooled and tricked me. You are all in league, you vagabonds and villains, you cast-eyed monster, give them to me, I say !"

He threw himself violently about, knocking over the table and chairs in his effort to get to Brass, who held the little bird in his hand and had Tip tight by the collar. Swinedig checked the showman by dodging to and fro in front of him and subjecting him to the peculiar process known as "eyeing one over."

"Come, now, friend," he gently reasoned, "it's all square, and no offense to nobody. Them animals belong to me fair

and favorable. I've been on the lookout for some time past for trained animals such as them, agreeable to the habits of a gentleman and conducive to a neat and genteel profit by exhibiting and showing of 'em off. Now that I have come by them in this tasty and convivial way, I ain't a-goin' to allow no ideas of sentiment to interfere with my future livelihood."

The master wrenched himself free, and drawing a knife, plunged forward. Quick as a flash, Mr. Swinedig had him by the wrist just as his hand was raised to strike. By an adroit motion, he turned the blow from himself and drove the knife with powerful force into the showman's own left arm.

It was all over in an instant, and just how it happened no one knew. The master found himself out in the rain with his left arm hanging helpless at his side, and the blood flowing freely from a deep gash below the elbow. His empty show-box was thrust at his feet, and the wind caught the gaudy trimmings of baize and rattled the bells and bangles. There he stood alone in the cold and wind and rain, while the sound of loud voices penetrated through the closed door of the inn, and the frightened barks of Tip calling for his master rose louder than all the rest.

The showman clutched the box and staggered forward, filled with a blind fear that he had done somebody great bodily harm and must get away out of sight as soon as possible. The road was dark and strange, and his arm ached madly; but he blundered along, as best he could, dragging the box with him, and cursing softly at the jingling bells.

"Poor little Tip and Tobbitt," he sobbed, "poor little faithful things, I did it all for you to right ye, and I'll do it yet—never fear, I'll do it yet. Just give me time till this arm gets well and I'll go back and show them how they can fool with me—curse 'em!"

Here he dropped the box in order to shake his fist in the direction he had come, and then he wiped the blood from his fast-bleeding arm before taking his burden up once more and going on. It was such a weary walk—so cold and dark, and the cries of Tip growing fainter in the distance, and the blood flowing faster and faster, and the stones so many and rough, and the trees so unsteady in their rapid gait across the road to and fro! At last, when he saw the outlines of a little shed, he staggered toward it and thought, with a grateful smile, what a fine place it was, and how comfortable he should be. He

dragged the box in and set it in one corner, then he sat down on the box and smiled about in the darkness. A strange feeling of lightness came over him, and the heavy ache in his arm changed to numbness, so that he felt very comfortable and wholly pleased with his situation.

"How nice we are here, to be sure," he said. "What a cosy place, and Tobbitt and Tip fast asleep in the box. They need it, poor things, for they did many a fine trick to-day, and they'll do more to-morrow. We'll turn quite a handsome penny, we will, at the races. We must be up and on early, so's to get a good place before the crowd comes. Then we'll set up our box and I ain't afeared of any Punch show or Jarley Wax Works getting ahead of my pretty pets. What are those dumb things compared with my Tobbitt and Tip? I'll right ye, dearies, never fear. Tip shall have a blanket worked with pure gold, and a gold cap for his head, and a gold belt and a gold cane, and Tobbitt shall be a king in a little gold cage. By the powers! he shall have a gold throne and a gold crown, and I'll have a new act entitled 'The Coronation of Tobbitt, the Bird King!' Ha! how the nobility will cheer. I can see the Prime Minister wave his hat, and the royal descendants clap their hands. Tobbitt, my bird, you shall be the wonder of the living age!"

The master laughed in maudlin glee, and his eyes gleamed wild and bright in the darkness.

"Come!" he shouted, jumping on to the box—"Come, ye people of London! This way to see the greatest wonders of the day! Tobbitt and Tip, the delight of the gentry, the patronized of the royal family. Why so slow, ye laggards! gather about! Here, this way! The most wonderful exhibit of the age—the delight——"

The master sank down in a heap on the ground and his head fell back among the folds of the gaudy baize and the jingling bells.

Just then there was a flutter of wings and a quick patter of feet, and Tobbitt and Tip and the master were all together again. Tobbitt fluttered with a little glad cry against the master's cheek, and Tip crept under the master's hand.

"All ready for an early start," murmured the man. "We must be going soon—good places—nice ladies—Tobbitt and Tip—I'll right ye yet, my pets—never fear. Gold cane and

bells. Ha! come, good people. The coronation of Tobbitt, the Bird King! Tip, good doggie, never say die. There, here we go! See the field and the morning sun. My, what a merry crowd there'll be to-day—over there—there's our place—see the horses? Come, now is your time—ladies and gentlemen—Tobbitt will do his tricks—the patrons——”

The head fell to one side and the body of the master settled heavily against the box. Tobbitt fluttered into the poor, limp hand and, rolling on his back, folded his tiny claws on his breast. The dog crept nearer with a low whine.

“That's right, Tobbitt,” whispered the master, “we're ready to begin. I see them coming, dressed all in white; but nearer and nearer—oh, they are angels! They smile—they press closer—oh, Tobbitt—say—your—prayers——”

When the dog jumped through the window in the bar of “The Jolly Sandboys,” leaving a jagged hole in the glass, by which the little bird immediately made its escape, Swinedig and Brass, with many imprecations, prepared to follow. Armed with lanterns and great coats against the circumstances of the night, they gave pursuit with much vigor. Mr. Swinedig was very proficient in a style of whistle commonly called the “bulldog roar,” and in this melodious manner he occupied his time as he went along, thinking that the dog on hearing would be cheered by the prospect of home and friends and immediately return to his friendly care; but the whistle produced no better effect than awaking all the inhabitants of the trees, and after several admonitions, given not very gently by Mr. Brass, the amiable Swinedig let the “bulldog roar” die away into silence. It was only after a long search under bushes and hedges and through roads that they came out again into the road in front of the little shed.

Here the search ended, and by the lights of the lantern the little group was revealed. Twisted and turned, with body bent and head thrown back, lay the master, resting against the tawdry box, one arm hanging limp and bloodless, with an ugly gash and the clotted blood slowly dripping down over the baize and bells. The other hand lay palm upward on the ground, and in its cold grasp was the little brown bird, very still, lying on its back with its tiny claws folded upon its breast. Tip crouched at the side, his head lovingly laid on his master's knee. A sharp piece of glass was bedded far in

his throat, and his life-blood wet the blanket and the sprightly cap now all awry.

A rude hand jostled the little bird, but the bird prayed on
A rude foot kicked the little dog, but he rolled over on his back quite stiff and cold. A rude voice spoke to the master, but only the wind and rain answered. No rude hand or foot or voice had the power any more to raise them from their duties.

A poor, cheap, gaudy traveling show. A dog and a bird and a man—all dead together! But surely the love of a man to a beast and the devotion of a beast to a man counts for something, and it may be that in another world our poor shows have a better chance, and the cheapness and gaudiness are changed into qualities which we did not recognize here, but which may be called there love, kindness and fidelity.





BY PAUL OLKAR HÖCKER.

THE brigade drill, which had taken place in a terrific downpour of rain, was at an end. The oldest inhabitants even could not remember so wet an August.

The district, however, in which we were stationed was the most delightful one possible, belonging as it did to the class of so-called "Champagne districts" that are naturally so popular. The senior officers were not so enthusiastic in regard to a manœuvre encampment that was enlivened by dances, ladies' receptions, lawn tennis, boating parties, etc., and the staff officers were much fonder of a game of l'ombre in a fog of smoke with a keg of beer beside them. My younger comrades, however, particularly the bachelors among them, had found their stay in Sperlingslust one long round of pleasure.

We had returned to our quarters from the drill, wet to the skin. As it was already nearly three o'clock, the castle party had breakfasted alone; but a faultless lunch, served in a most appetizing manner, was awaiting us on the glass veranda.

You can imagine, gentlemen, how good it all tasted after I at last got out of my woefully soiled tunic and was tilting at the table in a comfortable dry jacket, with a delicious lobster in front of me, and the cooler with the obligatory Roederer beside me.

After the many flattering criticisms that had been showered on the regiment the Colonel had already spoken his appreciation, standing outside in the pouring rain, to all the officers

*Translated by Virginia Watson, from the German, for Short Stories.

and men for their excellent bearing and the manner in which they had conducted themselves. He repeated the speech again inside with his champagne-glass in his hand, and he was good enough to also kindly remember the "Gentlemen of the Reserve."

We then resumed our semi-official deportment, and as the official part of the breakfast was at an end, we wound it up with a glass, which we did ourselves the honor of drinking to the Colonel's health.

The breakfast bade fair to extend into dinner, which was set for six o'clock, in company naturally of the ladies of this hospitable house. The drinking was kept up bravely, and if my wife, who had gone off to spend the summer in the Riesengebirge with grandmother, the baby and Uncle Martin, who joined them a week later, could have seen me at that moment I am sure her sympathy would have been less tender for her poor darling and his "unusual hardships." For, as I have already mentioned, there was no end to the Roederer and our kindly host did not weary in quenching the general thirst.

And now, gentlemen, imagine my consternation when a servant suddenly presented a dispatch to me on a silver salver. Nothing could have surprised me as greatly as what follows:

"Uncle Martin has fallen peacefully to sleep. Come at once or all is lost. Thousand kisses."

I acknowledge frankly that my head felt a bit giddy; not as if I—you understand—but a gentle, I might almost say foggy, veil had fallen between me and the rest of the world. It took a longer time than usual before I was able to come to any conclusion as to the most necessary steps to be taken. My poor little wife and good old Uncle Martin! We had never been on the most intimate terms with him. He was a rough, blunt farmer. His circle of interests so different from ours; but for the moment I was heartily sorry that I had never once visited him at Burkersroda, which was scarcely twenty-five miles distant from Sperlingslust. If the telegram were only a little more full. What did it mean, anyway? Leave at once or all is lost! What lost? Did my little wife fear any dispute as to the will? She was not usually so selfish; and nothing further in regard to the way in which the misfortune had come to pass! I pushed my glass aside, and pressing my hot, troubled head into my hands that had grown icy,

I meditated. It was an exhausting work in the midst of all the laughter and chattering that was going on about me. But at last I came to a conclusion. I must go at once to Burkersroda to look after matters. There was no other way in which to interpret my wife's mysterious words. An energetic hand was needed now at Burkersroda, and it was my duty to leave for there at once.

I wondered whether Uncle Martin had reached Burkersroda before the sudden occurrence. . . . I looked for the telegram to study it more closely; but the guests were leaving the table, my neighbor had vanished, and with him the dispatch. He had doubtless picked up the paper by accident with his cards. I reported the sad event to the Colonel of the regiment, discovering to my dismay that it cost me a certain effort to maintain my military carriage, and begged for a few days' leave of absence. The Colonel was astonished. He was willing to release me from duty on Saturday and Monday; but there his powers ceased, for on Tuesday, when our marching tour was over, we were again under higher authority.

"And will you not stay for the dinner, Lieutenant?"

"If you will be kind enough to excuse me, Colonel."

"Good luck to your journey, then; I will explain your absence to our host. H'm! so you will have to play the farmer now, Lieutenant? Will you keep the estate? Write novels in the morning and attend to the drains in the afternoon?"

I had not yet made up my mind in regard to this matter. To be frank, I was too much overcome to do so at that moment.

As I had gone through the manœuvres unmounted, I was greatly pleased that Herr von Kriegareck, a volunteer of Sperlingslust, had put his bicycle at my disposal. I put on my civilian clothes hurriedly, and giving orders to my man, my address to the Adjutant and messages for my host and the ladies, I mounted the wheel, whose owner was still asleep, and whom I did not wish to disturb after the fatiguing breakfast, and rode off.

It had ceased raining luckily, and the ride on the wheel did me good, particularly my head, that seemed twice its ordinary size.

Bathed in sweat I arrived in Burkersroda shortly before nine. One of the two bailiffs was in the courtyard whistling heartlessly. I sprang from my wheel.

"Where is the master laid?" I asked him solemnly in a tone of displeasure in order to make the man see the unseemliness of his music. The bailiff was in ignorance of it all. He could not realize that his kind master, who had left Burkersroda a week before so perfectly sound and well, could be . . . He ran off sobbing.

The news made a most terrible sensation in the house. The housekeeper cried, the maid sobbed, then came the overseer, the second bailiff, the coachman, the gardener. I tell you, gentlemen, it was a terrible time for me; but, on the other hand, I was glad that Uncle Martin had been so beloved by every one. Perhaps these faithful souls would transfer their affection to his successor—to me, the probable heir.

"Whatever will Mr. Fritz say to it?" the housekeeper suddenly exclaimed, bursting into a fresh fit of weeping.

I must confess that the mention of the otherwise so harmless word Fritz threw me into a certain state of excitement. Was the housekeeper speaking of my Cousin Fritz, my dear uncle's spoiled nephew, that giddypate of a briefless barrister, who had been a nail in my uncle's coffin?

Right! The door opened and Mr. Fritz rushed in. I was pained to find him here.

"Old chap! old chap!" he addressed me (I must tell you that my cousin is rather brusque), "how can it be possible? Daddy was coming back to-morrow. I got a card from him this morning from Krummhübel! And so suddenly! Poor daddy!"

I don't know why, but I doubted my cousin's sorrow. There was something so avaricious in his features. It displeased me, too, that he had begun all of a sudden to call my uncle "daddy," who was, after all, only a great-uncle. Then we had a long, earnest conversation.

"As my wife ordered me to leave everything immediately and come here, I take it that this was in a certain measure my uncle's last wish. In the meanwhile, therefore, I will take things in hand here."

"But allow me," my cousin interrupted, and there was a haste in his whole manner which annoyed me, "daddy ordered me to look after things here. The hardest work was, it is true, interrupted by this frightful weather, and the overseer, Hennings, manages everything autocratically, whether uncle is here or not."

"Well, that will be changed now," said I, pulling down my vest energetically, "and I hope that you will accommodate yourself to my methods. It seems to me that the moment is grave enough."

Then my Cousin Fritz began to weep, with the intention of mollifying me, I suppose. Oh, I would not trust my cousin round the corner.

"You are the elder, cousin," he said at last, blowing his nose affectingly, "and so I am quite pleased to have you look after the work here for the present. I should be too much affected to do so, to tell the truth."

I wrinkled my brow. Why was he playing such a farce before me? He was the very prototype of a happy heir. Yes, indeed, though it costs me something to say it, he acted like one, too. He knew dear Uncle Martin's weaknesses. The dear deceased had doubtless provided for him amply in his will; perhaps he was calculating the sum to himself while he said to me, sighing:

"I will drive over to Krummhübel at once and relieve your wife of the sad and troublesome duties that must now be attended to."

I could not oppose this; but my wish to show respect to my uncle suggested still something else to me. I called the steward and ordered him to get together the twelve best laborers. They were to put on their Sunday clothes and accompany my cousin, because there must be a deputation of his people to show the old gentleman the last honors. Just imagine my exasperation when the steward declared to me up and down that it was an impossibility. It would probably not rain the next day, and he would therefore need every man on the estate.

"Herr Hennings, I do you the honor to take it for granted that this terrible occurrence——"

"First the work, and then the man!" he interrupted me stubbornly.

"But I order——"

"If the dear, blessed master could know that we did not turn over the hay to-morrow, but sent the laborers off traveling, he would turn in his grave."

"But, my dear Herr Hennings, from to-day on it is my will which counts here."

"But the hay will rot," the rude steward cried.

"Let it rot, then ; I would rather lose it, and even if my entire estate were to go to pieces, my good uncle's earthly remains must and shall be shown the honor that so noble a man deserves."

"And I tell you that your uncle doesn't care a fig for honors," the rude man answered me ; "but he would never allow the hay to be ruined. Heavens ! you are no farmer ! If you were the future owner a thousand times over, I will not give you the men."

You see, gentlemen, that this was a case which might prove a precedent. Could I allow myself to be so treated in the presence of the housekeeper, the two bailiffs and particularly of my hated and smiling Cousin Fritz ? We had the deuce of a row, I can tell you ; but in the end I came off victor on my own ground, with a loss, to be sure, for the steward gave me notice on the spot.

"So this is all the respect you show, Herr Hennings ?"

"There can be only one will on an estate. If you choose to enforce yours, sir, you have a perfect right to do so ; but I have been overseer here for the past twelve years, and even your sainted uncle had to agree with what I ordered."

I laughed loudly.

"We turn over a new leaf to-day. I will not dance over my estate to the tune of an overseer's pipe."

"Then I have only one request now to make : that I may leave to-morrow morning."

"Granted !" I replied angrily.

The night that followed was a terrible one. As the early morning train left at four o'clock, and the nearest railway station was two hours' ride away, the choice of the members of the deputation had to be made at once. Fritz, of course, left all the bother to me.

The wagons drove off in the darkness. Cousin Fritz spread himself out in the first one, my good uncle's comfortable landau, the sleepy-faced workmen squatted down in the farm wagons which followed. I had given each one of them a thaler for food, Fritz was to take upon himself to look out for lodgings for them.

Worn out at last I was on the point of going to bed, but a little after three o'clock, just in the best time for sleeping, the two bailiffs came and asked for my orders.

I got up growling. "Well, gentlemen," I said, rather subdued, "what do you advise?"

The two bailiffs had lost all powers of forming an opinion for themselves under the overseer's oppressive tyranny. I grew rather cross.

"Why don't you answer? You see, I am still so overcome. . . . Great heavens! is my estate to bring me nothing but worry and trouble?"

This seemed to touch these two simple creatures. They mumbled something of hay rotting—no men—bad state of affairs.

"I tell you this rotting hay makes me angry. The devil! Does this miserable hole produce nothing but hay? Are there no potatoes? Didn't I see a pile of potatoes by the gate? There is something to be done with them, hey?"

The fellows twisted and turned and gulped. At last one of them said slyly:

"Oh, sir, those are sugar beets in both the trenches."

I saw now that they knew the overseer had left the house these creatures wished to annoy me, for I can take my oath on it that they were potatoes; but was I to dispute with such people? No; I was too tired, too exhausted; moreover, my grief for Uncle Martin still lay too heavy on my heart. So at last it was decided that the hay was to be turned.

"At what time do the men get up here?" I asked.

"At four, sir."

That was too early for me. I ordered the first bailiff to come at five to take me to the fields.

We set off punctually at five. The sun was already fiendishly hot. Such a change since the day before! I preferred to ride a horse. The bailiff trotted along beside me, sullen and sleepy. At last we reached the famous hay, and what sight met my eye? Do not fear, gentlemen, three men were poking around leisurely in the steaming hay with long forks, and the second bailiff was standing by with an absent expression on his face. You can imagine my vexation.

"Where are the others?" I asked in the voice of a judge.

"Which others, sir? There was no one else in the court. The extra hands left early this morning when they found that the overseer had gone. They were Poles, sir. Herr Hennings was the only one who could make himself understood to their foreman."

"Ha! h'm! an intrigue, then, of this honest overseer! This sly serpent that my uncle has nourished in his bosom these twelve long years."

I despised Herr Hennings from that hour.

"But there must be more people in the court?"

"No, sir; there are fifteen workmen's houses in the village, not including those of the two bailiffs. Twelve men drove off this morning, and three stayed behind."

To be sure, the calculation was correct, and ordering these three, at all events, to be very industrious, I rode off on a tour of inspection. Then I returned to the house to write to my wife. I do not like to look back to-day on the sorrowful memories that overcame me at my dear uncle's desk. The work, the difficult profession of a worried farmer, turned my thoughts, God be praised, in another direction.

Naturally, I found much to find fault with in the house. I discovered that my good uncle had been much too lenient with his servants, including the housekeeper, who dared reproach me for sending the overseer away from my estate. When I answered her rather sharply (you can understand that I was beginning to loose patience), there was a fresh flow of tears.

I hate women's tears. You can believe me, gentlemen, when I tell you that I am a good-natured fellow at all other times; but if I—well, to make a long story short, when I left the court the housekeeper also had given me notice. I acknowledge that this crying ingratitude lay heavy on my heart. Are kindnesses and love then useless? Well, then, I should try sternness—I would now become a despot.

I rode off again to the fields to see the progress of the hay-making, determined to be unrelentingly severe to any one who tried to get the better of me. And they dared try it! Listen, gentlemen: The three workmen were turning over the hay slowly and deftly; but do you know what the two bailiffs were doing? They were resting against their sticks, doing nothing—not moving a finger, I say.

"What are you doing here?" I called sharply.

"Why, turning hay, sir!"

"Yes, I see the three men; but what are you doing, you two bailiffs?"

"We are overseeing, sir, as we always do."

That was the last straw that broke the camel's back.

"What!" I cried, "you are overseeing? You had better get to work, gentlemen, it is healthier for you! I do not keep you only for show!"

Now just imagine what happened. The two bailiffs, angry probably because the three workmen laughed, declared that it was unheard of to require bailiffs to do manual work, though now and then they might do so voluntarily.

"Voluntarily?" I interrupted them, red-hot with anger; "my bailiffs are bound to work with the others, gentlemen."

You have doubtless already guessed that I was once more given notice. I concealed my great annoyance, and laughing sarcastically, I dismissed the two useless bailiffs, and what is more, there on the spot. Then, while the three workmen were eating their lunches that they had brought with them, I told them how I should conduct hay-making in the future. It was a clear and explicit speech, painted in local colors. But, alas! the men did not understand my intentions as yet, and the work was not progressing satisfactorily enough for me, so I got down from my horse and, taking up a fork, began to work—I, the owner of the estate. I wished that the lazy bailiffs could have seen me. If there were a spark of spirit in them they would have felt ashamed of their affected superiority. As the bay horse that I was riding was growing restless, I sent the oldest workman, who could not do as much work as the others, to the road to hold him. Then the fun began.

It was a hot day, gentlemen, and after half an hour I was dead lame; but my spirit was too high, I could not rest, nor did I seem to grow weary. The men opened eyes and mouth to see me work so; but I gave them no rest, either. The work went on in this way for four hours. I sent the bay home.

At last I reached the end of my powers. The two workmen seemed exhausted as well; but as they did not murmur in spite of it, only glancing at me beseechingly with sad eyes, I ordered a pause of half an hour. The two men let their forks fall at once and, stretching themselves out on the ground, fell fast asleep. I followed their example.

Oh, how delightful was the rest! Yes, now I understood Tolstoi's enthusiasm for the joys of field labor.

When I awoke my head was all confused. I saw, to my dismay, that it was almost five o'clock. I had to use extraordinary measures to wake my two workmen—tickling their nostrils with straws, etc. They complained of hunger and thirst.

Well, I had no intention of treating them inhumanely, so I sent one of them to the court after a bottle of Moselle wine and some food.

In the meantime, we two went to work again, and kept it up for an hour; but the messenger did not return. This made me angry, and I sent the other one after him, ordering him to return within twenty minutes on pain of instant dismissal. I continued the exhausting work alone; but now that I had no one to incite by my good example, the right incentive was lacking. It was six o'clock, and no one came—seven o'clock, almost half-past!

Tired to death, I put up work. The sweat was rolling down my face in streams. There is something beautiful in outdoor work, something inspiring; but God forbid that I am left to manage my estate all alone. No; I do not feel equal to it. But one thing I realized: an example must be made, for the insubordination of my people bordered on mutiny.

When I reached the court, limping slightly, I found the women of the village assembled there. What a chattering and yelling there was when they saw me approaching. I was surrounded on every side, and was lectured out of fifteen mouths, that were anything but beautiful. I was a tyrant, an extortioner, and through it all I heard curses and the cries of little children.

Gentlemen, you can have no idea of what a tumult it was. I begged for quiet, but they did not hear me. I represented to the ladies that a parliamentary debate was impossible without order—they yelled, groaned, shrieked and wailed, and the children whined.

How can I explain it to you? I had grown weary and—I gave way. I had surely tried to do my best. I wanted to be friend and brother to my dependants, their co-worker—I was misunderstood.

All my estate now gave me no more pleasure. Poor Uncle Martin! Why did you die so soon? You were made for a farmer, had nerves of iron, and a supply of patience—and, alas! how ill-fitted for it was your heir. When I saw the anger and enmity that the laborers showed me, when the fear oppressed me that I was the cause of the misery and unhappiness of all these people (for so they all declared it was), then I determined to give up my inheritance. If I could sell my terrible estate, good! then I should not disdain the profits from it, for I am

father of a family, and must think of my little daughter's marriage portion, which will be required of me in about eighteen years from now; but to manage my estate myself and alone—that is beyond my powers.

In this vein I wrote to my wife:

“So far as uncle is concerned—well, ‘*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*’; but I must confess to you, my dear wife, I am not thankful for this inheritance. Fritz may secure a notary and arrange the horrid affair. I cannot appear at the funeral—my grudge against my uncle is still too fresh.”

When it grew dark I got on the bicycle and left my estate secretly. It was a supernatural exertion after what had gone before to make this nocturnal journey. I slept a couple of hours on the way in a village ale-house, and arrived at Sperlingslust Sunday morning, weary, aching and exhausted.

I was not astonished to meet my comrade, the gay Second Lieutenant von Prittwitz in the garden. He was just returning after a short leave to the next district.

Prittwitz came toward me with outstretched arms and beaming with joy:

“Have you heard the latest news?” he called out to me before he reached me. “I am engaged! engaged! engaged!”

“To whom?” I asked moodily.

“To Fräulein Elly, my host's niece—an angel, a veritable angel.”

“When did it happen?”

“Day before yesterday, at noon. Didn't you really notice when that ass of a servant handed you the note that was meant for me? To be sure you were infernally hazy!”

“Note! What sort of a note?”

“While Uncle Martin was gently nodding Elly wrote me a few lines with the typewriter on a telegraph blank—just think, the little rascal!”

“What! Uncle Martin! Telegram! Typewriter!”

“That was the decisive rendezvous. If we had not got round Elly's uncle at that time all would have been lost. Just think, when he woke he discovered us in the corner with our arms around each other. Ha! ha! but there was a tempest, and there followed the customary blessing.”

“Furiation!” I cried, and then I continued in confusion:

"Of course, I give you my blessing also, but tell me, you wretch, that telegram was meant for you?"

"For whom else? By the way, I remember, they tell me you have had a great loss, old fellow."

"Oh, please, that has nothing to do with the matter."

"Of course not; a happy heir to a great estate—ha, ha, ha!"

This "Ha, ha, ha!" cut me to the quick. From that moment I disliked Prittwitz.

You can imagine the rest, gentlemen. My uncle was alive, of course. He will never die, I trust. The following day I received a letter from Burkersroda. Such a letter!

I kept to myself during the rest of the manœuvres. It was only when the conversation turned on my estate that I grew angry, for then I thought I heard my hated comrade Prittwitz's diabolical "Ha, ha, ha!"

I have given up farming forever.



THE GOLD OF VINCOSTA*

BY BENNET COPPLESTONE

THE TREASURER.



ONE day, not many years since, the Treasurer of Vincosta, who was also Prime Minister of that inconsiderable South American Republic, called the members of his Government into his presence, and thus addressed them :

"Gentlemen, my mind, continually bent upon furthering the well-being of our noble republic, has conceived and given substance to a financial scheme of far-reaching consequences, both to our country and to ourselves."

There was a languid sensation, and the Cabinet, already convinced of Senhor Alesano's financial genius—he was a Portuguese Jew—prepared to listen.

"As you are unhappily aware, the recent serious fall in the price of silver has laid upon our beloved country a burden under which she groans quarterly. Our standard coin, the silver peso, which formerly was worth three-and-ninepence in English money, was reckoned last year at only one-and-ten; this year I foresee a fall to one-and-nine, and it will not be long, in my judgment, before our once imperial coin must be considered the equivalent of a beggarly eighteenpence. It is true, gentlemen, that by wise and timely legislative enactments we have prevented the traders within the limits of Vincosta from charging as much for their goods as the exchange value of the peso would seem to warrant; but our control ceases with the boundaries of the republic. When we pay the interest upon our national debt, upon the capital embarked in our railways, our mines and our manufactures, when, I say, we meet the obligations of our own personal

*From "The Cornhill Magazine."

loans, the peso has only the value which foreigners set upon it. All the capital in Vincosta has come from Europe, and belongs to Europe. Moreover, when you or I, gentlemen, impelled by an overmastering anxiety to acquire the fullest experience in the art of government, reluctantly leave our homes to dwell awhile in foreign cities—whether we go to London, Paris, Vienna, or to our Mother Lisbon—we find the savings of self-denial and patriotic sentiment reduced automatically by more than half.”

He paused amid murmurs of “shame.”

“You are rightly indignant,” said Senhor Alesano; “but anger, though it may be a spur to effort, is of no avail by itself. I myself raged in secret until the flesh fell from my bones and seemed to effect nothing. Yet the emotion of the heart stimulated the energies of the brain. I, gentlemen, did not stop at anger. I thought over all the means by which a poor country becomes rich; I turned my eyes to the wealthy England and forced myself, at the inevitable pecuniary loss, to make a tempestuous voyage to that London where gold can do everything except improve the abominable climate. And at last, at last, I found a remedy.”

By this time the excitement in the Council Chamber had become tremendous. The Treasurer looked around upon the eager faces and smiled grandly.

“I found a remedy, and I have called you together so that you may learn what it is. I will not play with your suspense. What we need in Vincosta is a gold standard. You do not grasp the immense, the splendid significance of this idea? Let me explain. We will suppose for a moment that a gold standard has been established—upon the method by which this can be done I will presently dwell. The standard coin of the republic would then be gold instead of silver, and the value of our peso would no longer be determined by the price of the silver composing it. It would be in a position similar to that of an English florin or half-crown, both silver coins, which bear a certain fixed proportion of the value of an English gold sovereign. The metal contained in an English half-crown is not worth more than one-and-twopence, yet every one accepts the coin as being worth two-and-six because it is the eighth part of a sovereign. The half-crown is a ‘token’ coin, and its value would be just the same if it were made of tin. Picture to yourselves the happiness we should enjoy in

Vincosta if our peso became a 'token' coin and were valued, not at a trumpery one-and-ten, but at three-and-nine, the old glorious three-and-nine! Consider the reductions it might be possible to make in the taxes, and imagine yourselves in possession of salaries doubled at one legislative stroke."

Cries indicative of unbounded admiration rang through the room.

"Let us," went on Alesano, "not be influenced by the personal aspects of this great national question. Some of you may suppose that all we have to do is to declare the peso a certain proportion of an imaginary gold coin. Unfortunately this simple declaration, though doubtless effective so far as regarded our Vincostan fellow-citizens, would carry no weight whatever in Europe. We pay our debts in Europe, and it is Europe which we must convince of the genuine character of our future currency. A gold standard, to be effective, must be based upon a reserve of hard golden cash."

Black depression instantly fell upon the Vincostan Cabinet. Growls of dissatisfaction began to be heard, and the name of Alesano was coupled by some to epithets signifying grave disrespect. "There is not enough gold in Vincosta," growled the Minister of the Interior, "to make a pair of handcuffs." As presumably he knew the interior, and being Chief of the Police, was familiar with handcuffs, his authority was painfully strong. "Have you included Alesano's rings?" scornfully asked the young Secretary of the Council, pointing to those massive examples of the jeweler's art. "Base the standard on them."

Senhor Alesano astutely kept silent until his colleagues had become saturated with discontent. Then he delivered an attack with irresistible force.

"Fools!" cried he harshly, "who are you to criticise the schemes of your Prime Minister and of the Treasurer of Vincosta? You, who would grovel the more the more you declined toward your native squalor! I offer you a gold standard, I, the one man in Vincosta who has the wit to conceive the idea and the energy to make it profitable, and you call me Jewish pig. Were not the negotiations even now completed I would withdraw——"

He was interrupted by shouts of "Negotiations completed!" "Why didn't you say so before?" "Pardon, noble Alesano."

"Yes, completed," resumed the Treasurer calmly; "while you slept I worked, and now you enter into the fruits of my labors. Listen. The plan was in my mind when I journeyed to London, and on arrival I consulted the great financiers of that great city. You are aware that the credit of Vincosta is at present indifferent. We borrowed the last possible peso a year ago at the time when we mortgaged the Houses of Parliament. Had I tried to negotiate an ordinary currency loan, no one of wealth would have listened, but the words 'gold standard' opened all doors and loosened all banking accounts. Those who had already lent us money burned to lend us more in so sacred a cause. I offered to exchange all our existing depreciated currency paper for gold bonds, and the Lord Mayor invited me to a banquet. It was decided by the opulent house of R—— that three millions in five per cent. Vincostan gold bonds, inscribed at the Bank of England (the Treasurer rolled the sweet words on his tongue), would form a sound basis for our future gold standard, and the millions were guaranteed to me at once."

"Three million pesos!" shouted the Cabinet in admiration.

"Pesos!" contemptuously returned Alesano. "Three millions sterling in yellow English sovereigns."

"As soon as the necessary acts have been passed by Parliament," he went on, after the unconscious Minister of the Interior had been adroitly bled by the Secretary of War, "three millions in English gold will be shipped to us, and deposited in the vaults of the 'National Bank of Vincosta.' We shall not only restore to our peso its value of 3s. 9d.—that is, 16 pesos to 3l. English—but we shall issue Bank of Vincostan notes to the amount of at least thirty million pesos payable in gold at sight. These will circulate freely within our dominions, and the issue will give us the control of thirty million pesos—for the purposes—of—State!"

The Prime Minister looked gravely at his Cabinet, and the faces around him all broke into a grin of unfathomable meaning. Then a great wave of cheering dashed against the walls of the Council Chamber.

THE RESERVE OF GOLD.

The magnificent proposal of Senhor Alesano was carried without delay into effect, and for a while the Republic of Vincosta, in the persons of its public servants, displayed signs of

unexampled prosperity. Secretaries of State became millionaires (in pesos), heads of departments built handsome villas on the shores of the Pacific, and even plain civil servants lived in circumstances of comfort, which were the envy of foreign officials. But all through the happy time, which extended for nearly two years, the day of doom was approaching. No one but the shrewd Treasurer foresaw the end, and no one but he appreciated the slow steps of its advance. He was, by virtue of his office, president of the National Bank, and day by day he watched the splendid stock of borrowed gold grow less.

When a man who dwells in Vincosta wishes to send money to his creditor in England, he must either procure gold to the amount of the debt and dispatch that, or he must settle a corresponding debt which his creditor, or some other resident in England, owes in Vincosta. In other words, he must purchase a bill payable by England to Vincosta. The debtor selects the method which at the moment happens to be the cheaper. Gold costs something for freight and insurance, and bills also cost something—often a good deal—because they are convenient.

If England had been called upon during these notable two years to pay as much to Vincosta as Vincosta had to pay to England, little gold would have passed, and Alesano's reserve would have remained practically untouched. But this, alas! was not the case. All the capital in Vincosta belonged to England; the farms, the houses, the shops, even the horses and carts in her chief city, Santa Maria, were mortgaged to England; the interest on all her countless debts, public and private, cried out for settlement, and the National Bank had to pay. There were not enough bills payable from England to Vincosta to go round. Everybody wanted them, and only a few of the buyers could be satisfied. Not being able to get bills, what did Vincostan debtors do? They took bank-notes to the National Bank, exchanged them for English sovereigns out of the Treasurer's stock, and remorselessly sent the proceeds back to England.

Senhor Alesano watched the cruel process go on from day to day, and his brow became lined with thought.

One morning he entered his wife's boudoir. "My dear *Theréa*," he said, "we will go for a cruise of a few months in the yacht. I am wearied with the cares of State."

The senhora, who was indolently lying on her cushions,

merely nodded assent, but there came a strange glitter into her black Spanish eyes.

"To the Islands?" she inquired, after a pause.

"Yes," said Alesano with emphasis, glancing at the waiting maid. "To the Islands."

The Vigilante, Alesano's new steam yacht, had been recently built in the Clyde. She registered 500 tons, and was luxuriously fitted as to her cabins. What was more natural than that Senhor and Senhora Alesano should take a long holiday on board their charming possession? The departure of so important a political personage as the Prime Minister took some weeks to arrange, and every one had an opportunity of discussing his plans to their minutest details. "It is the pleasantest season for the Pacific Islands," pronounced the public opinion of Vincosta.

Shortly before the day of embarkation the President of the National Bank had an important conversation with his Scotch manager, Mr. MacTavish, and the Secretary for War, who, being the head of the greatest spending department in the republic, was associated with the Treasurer in the direction of the bank.

"MacTavish," said Alesano, "how much gold is there in the bank?"

"Five hundred thousand sovereigns and a few odd notes and pesos."

Alesano looked at General Bolivar, but the warrior was not disturbed. He did not understand finance.

"How long will that last?" asked the President.

MacTavish reflected. "Business is slack just now, and drafts are small. Unless there is a great increase in the supply of bills we shall be cleared out in six months."

"What will happen then?"

"We shall not be able to pay our notes, that's all." MacTavish laughed. A few years before, when agent for a Scotch bank, such a contingency would have stirred his business soul to its depths. Now he laughed. So great is the power of environment.

General Bolivar began to move uneasily. "I don't understand. What is all this talk of being cleared out? The bank is full of gold. I saw heaps the other day."

"Precisely," observed Alesano, "but when people hold notes, representing six times as much, which we are obliged to pay

on demand, and there is every reason to suppose that they will 'demand' before long, our hold upon those heaps is not secure."

The General gasped. "Is it as bad as that?"

"Quite as bad."

"Why didn't you tell me before?"

"I have tried to do so more than once," said Alesano, untruthfully; "but you did not understand me."

"How long have we before us?"

"You heard what MacTavish said. Six months at the outside."

"Merciful God, six months! And after that?"

"The old story of the depreciated peso aggravated."

"And I took my present house for three years," groaned Bolivar, "of which two have yet to run. Confound you, Alesano, who is to pay the rent?"

"I don't know. Perhaps you can suggest a remedy?"

"How on earth can I suggest a remedy when I know nothing about your beastly finance?"

"You have not found my finance beastly during the past two years."

"What a splendid time it has been! There never was such a time in Vincosta before. Make it last a little longer, Alesano, I implore you. What will my wife say when I tell her this awful news?"

The warrior bowed his honored head in grief.

"Don't tell her at all. I cannot do the impossible, but I can make the good time last a little longer."

"Not more than six months," bluntly pronounced Mr. MacTavish.

The Treasurer smiled. "Can I not? Suppose that our gold were all stolen, MacTavish, what would happen then?"

"We should be ruined at once instead of six months hence."

"Not if we published the fact of the loss. Our vanished resources would be multiplied so many times by rumor that even sensible business men would credit us with losing millions. We should also have the best possible reason for temporarily suspending the payment of our notes while steps were being taken to recover the gold from the thieves, or from the bank—which would be responsible."

"But the bank is the Vincostan Government."

"We know that, but no one else does. It is generally be-

lieved that the shares of the bank are largely held in England. It is a belief which I have always encouraged."

"Oh!" said MacTavish, and fell to thinking.

Senhor Alesano's scheme was that the rulers of the bank should steal their own gold, and then advertise the loss over the world. MacTavish turned over the ingenious plan in his sober Scottish mind. At first it seemed absurdly fantastic, but soon he began to detect certain solid advantages.

"Your object is to gain time?"

"Exactly."

"We should succeed so far, I think. We could suspend payments in specie under such circumstances without much injury to our credit. I do not think that the peso would quickly depreciate. I suppose that when the public expectation of our speedy recovery of the gold had worn itself out, you would find the stuff and begin a new lease of life."

"You understand me perfectly, MacTavish. All the delay would be so much clear profit."

"Very good, I will help; but, of course, you are responsible."

"Of course; I and General Bolivar."

"What's that? what's that?" cried Bolivar. "I responsible? Well, I don't know that it matters. I am responsible for a good many things. My chief anxiety is about that house."

It was thereupon arranged that a scientific burglary should take place on the night before Senhor Alesano's departure, and that the gold should be removed to the vaults of the Custom House upon the quay of Santa Maria.

"Our first cruise," said Senhor Alesano to his wife, "begins two days hence and lasts for a week."

"And after that?"

"After that," he answered slowly, "if the weather be fair we will bear away for the Islands."

Senhora Alesano laughed.

The Treasurer's plan was carried out with the attention to detail for which he was remarkable. He himself superintended the operations and was careful to leave just those traces which the police force of the republic would expect.

"The burglary," said the Treasurer to his accomplices, "was performed with the assistance of false keys. As the keys naturally did not fit at first, we will leave some steel filings on the threshold of the strong-room. The boxes of gold were

unexpectedly heavy, and the thieves were compelled to drag them along the stone floor. Please assist me, MacTavish, to make the scratches sufficiently deep."

With the aid of the principal Custom House officer, who, of necessity, was taken into the conspiracy, the work of transporting the gold was completed. It was an immense task. There were one hundred cases, and each weighed more than a hundredweight.

"I must leave the custody of the national treasure to you," said Alesano as they stood in the vault of the Custom House. "Two new locks have been fitted on the door. Here, General Bolivar, is the key of one. I give the other to you, Senhor Gomez. Every evening you will please examine the vaults together and satisfy yourselves that the gold is safe. And now, farewell. Senhor Gomez, one last caution."

The Treasurer and the Custom House officer stood for a moment apart from the rest.

"You understand?"

"Yes; in seven days from to-morrow evening."

"I shall depend on you."

"Pardon me, Senhor, but why bring the gold here? It pleases me well, but why?"

"Because," said Alesano, "there is one incorruptible man in Vincosta, and he is the manager of the National Bank."

THE VIGILANTE.

A week later, on the day appointed by the Treasurer, Senhor Gomez stood waiting upon the quay at Santa Maria. It was after midnight, and extremely dark.

"He is certain to come," murmured the officer, "but when or how I do not know. The Vigilante has not been heard of since she sailed. I expect the cunning old devil has kept far off until sunset, and is now dashing for Santa Maria at full steam with his lights out. He is equal to anything. If any one else had employed me on such a job, I would have got through both those locks and steamed off with the whole treasure. But it would not do to play tricks with Alesano. He would find me and blow my brains out if I were at the other end of the world."

Gomez began to laugh quietly to himself.

"Poor old Bolivar! It is delightful to see him come every

night with MacTavish, to satisfy himself that all is safe. They came an hour ago, and will come to-morrow when they will take a deal of satisfying. So MacTavish is incorruptible! Ah, they must be rich, those Scotch!"

A distant whistle struck softly upon the Custom House officer's ear. He stared at the black water, but saw nothing. The whistle was repeated. Still he saw nothing, but soon, as he looked, the form of a white-sailed boat was faintly etched on the water.

"Here he is," said Senhor Gomez.

The boat ran swiftly in, followed by another, and out of the first stepped Treasurer Alesano.

"Good," he said quietly, "you are a faithful servant, Senhor Gomez."

"It is my interest to be faithful, senhor."

"True; that is the best guarantee."

Three sailors followed Alesano up the stone steps of the quay.

"The yacht lies two miles out," explained Alesano. "At sunset she was fifty miles away."

The party moved quickly toward the door of the Custom House. Gomez drew out his key, but Alesano waved him aside. "Yours is not necessary. It was easy to get a double set of keys."

They entered the vaults where lay the hundred cases.

"Here is our cargo, lads."

Then the powerful sailors fell upon the gold, and removed the boxes one by one to the boats, until ninety had been stowed away.

"The rest are yours, Senhor Gomez," said Alesano. "The fortune is great, but not greater than the service you have rendered. Can I remove them for you?"

"If your men will carry them to the water's edge I shall be relieved. I have a swift launch ready, and in twenty-four hours my fortune and I will both be in Chili."

"You are wise. I was about to suggest a similar precaution."

When the last case had been carried away, Alesano carefully locked the door. "To-morrow, or rather this evening, for it is three o'clock, General Bolivar will discover that finance is even more exciting than war. Once more farewell, Senhor Gomez, and may you enjoy your wealth in silence."

"It is my interest to be silent, senhor."

"True. That is the surest guarantee."

The heavily laden boats sailed to where the dark form of the Vigilante rolled upon the sea. Alesano saw all the cases safely hoisted on board, and then followed. The captain, an intelligent Scot, stood beside the wheel—all the British men are Scots in Vincosta—and near him Senhora Alesano reclined in a deck chair.

"Full steam, please, Captain Ritchie," cried the Treasurer of Vincosta. "Full steam, and shape her course for the Islands—the British Islands."

Senhora Alesano laughed.

The next day the Treasurer and his wife sat together under the great awning which covered half the deck, and conversed to the agreeable accompaniment of cigarettes.

"It is all locked away in the spare cabin. No one knows what it is, not even Captain Ritchie. The scheme was a pretty one, and worthy of you, my Therésa."

"Nay, it was yours."

"You are generous, my beautiful. We were 'collaborateurs.' The most excellent part," he went on, "is the innocence of Treasurer Alesano. He was away on the Pacific in his yacht; he trusted to the vigilance of Bolivar and MacTavish, to the integrity of Gomez. Alas! what a perfidy was that of Gomez! He to abscond with half a million in gold sovereigns! What an incredible villain! That is what Bolivar and MacTavish are crying. No one else will know anything at all, and neither Bolivar nor MacTavish dare tell the little which they really do know. They are robbers who have themselves been robbed. What humiliation is theirs! They will do nothing but wait for Alesano to return in order that he may put everything right. And Alesano will not return. He flies to England in the company of his beautiful Therésa, his dear one whom he has at last made rich. It was a perfect scheme."

"Quite perfect," assented the Senhora.

"In no country is a fortune so safe as in England. Ah, those Consols, expensive but solid; those railway debentures; loans of corporations! When the minute arrives to pay, there flies a cheque! The English do not ask for time and offer bills at three months. No, no. They send a cheque, payable on the instant, on the British nail. I shall put all the money

in Consols, and in railways, and in stocks of corporations. We will spend 13,000*l.* of interest every year, and all the while the principal money will be as safe as if in the Bank of England."

"Safer than in the Bank of Vincosta?"

Alesano laughed. "Much safer, my *Therésa*. We will not live in England, except for a few months in the short summer. We will pass the winter in sunny Spain, or in the South of France, in Algiers or in Egypt. Wherever we please—that is, you please—we will go, for we shall be rich, my *Therésa*."

"But if it is discovered at any time where the gold has gone?"

"Ha, ha! I shall laugh, that is all. I am the Prime Minister of Vincosta, and I have always set my face against the treaties of extradition which some nations make with others. Vincosta is alone in splendid isolation. She has no treaties."

"It was useful to have been Prime Minister."

"Most useful," said Alesano.

So the happy days passed throughout the long voyage. The intelligent Scottish Captain Ritchie shaped an excellent course through seas which were always calm. It was the winter season in the Pacific, a season of warm days and cool nights like an English summer. The vessel coaled at Hong Kong and again at Aden, and then passed up the Red Sea into the Mediterranean.

"We draw near England now," said the Treasurer. "A short two weeks, and the gold will be turned into paper, and we shall begin to calculate our dividends."

"I like gold best," said the simple *Therésa*.

One bright sunny afternoon the *Vigilante* steamed between the wooded banks of Southampton Water, and came to her moorings in the docks.

"Let us go ashore," appealed *Therésa*; "I am weary of ship quarters and ship food. Let us have an English dinner and sleep upon a soft English bed."

Alesano thought of his five tons of gold coin, and the dead weight of it gave him confidence.

"It is safe in the cabin. Yes, my beautiful, we will sleep ashore to-night."

"Do not leave the yacht," said he to Captain Ritchie. The captain nodded. "I prefer to stay aboard, sir." An invaluable man was Captain Ritchie, a man to win the confidence of even a Portuguese Jew. A sense of admiration for his captain

was in Alesano's mind as he went ashore. "The gold is as safe with Ritchie as with me. Ah, these Scotch, they are incorruptible!"

An English hotel was grateful to the voyagers after the long confinement of their yacht. A vessel, however large and sumptuous, can never be large or sumptuous enough. Its limitations are too inexorable.

Shortly after ten o'clock the following day, while taking a morning stroll, Alesano sauntered into the docks that he might look again upon his yacht. He arrived at the place of mooring, but the Vigilante was not there. He scanned all the ships in the docks, but the Vigilante was not one of them. Then he spoke to an official. "Where have you put my yacht, the Vigilante?" He spoke easily, for alarm had not yet come to him.

"The Vigilante?" replied the official. "Is that the yacht from South America which came in yesterday? She coaled last night and sailed at daybreak!"

"Sailed!" cried Alesano. "Sailed! Impossible!"

"It is true. Perhaps you had better speak to the harbor-master."

Alesano followed the courteous official. Not even yet had the conviction of his terrible loss forced itself upon him. A mistake must have been made. The yacht was his; her cargo of gold was his. No man, and certainly not the honest sailor Ritchie, could have been so inconceivably base as to rob him.

"Yes, sir," the harbor-master was speaking. "She coaled late last night, or early this morning, and at four o'clock she left the dock. The captain stated that the owner was aboard."

"I am the owner. Man, she was my yacht. Everything I possess in the world was on board."

The harbor-master shrugged his shoulders. "She is out of the jurisdiction by now."

Alesano rushed to the dock gates, boarded a cab, and drove straight for his hotel.

"My wife!" he cried; "where is my wife?"

"Mrs. Alesano," said the grave landlady—her honest British tongue rejected all foreign designations—"Mrs. Alesano went out half an hour ago, and drove with her luggage to the station. She asked for the next train to London, and I told her 10.15. It is now 10.30."

"She asked for the 10.15 and it is now 10.30," murmured Senhor Alesano. "It is now 10.30."

Then he fainted.

Twenty-four hours passed before Senhor Alesano was able to bend his mind to the dreadful subject which claimed his attention. The flight of his Therésa, his beautiful, following as it did the flight of Captain Ritchie with the yacht and the gold, had gone near to shattering the Treasurer's mental system altogether. But he was a strong man, and even in the early freshness of his misfortunes he began to make plans for the future.

"The gold is gone," he decided. "Ritchie will make for a South American port from which there is no extradition. In any case, I could take no action, for the law of no country would recognize the gold as mine. Ah, Therésa, I could bear even that frightful loss with cheerfulness if thou wert by my side! How could the love of a cold Scot compete with that of the noble Alesano? Thou hast gone to join him at some time and spot agreed upon. What treachery! I stole the gold for thee, and now thou wilt enjoy it with thy lover and laugh—laugh—malediction! As for me, the innocent deceived by false man and falser woman, I will return to my faithful Vincosta. I am still Prime Minister and Treasurer, and President of the National Bank. We will repudiate all our debts, public and private—how comforting is the recollection that I have not paid for the Vigilante—and we will begin a new life, without debts and without credit. After marriage, dishonor; after gold sovereigns, the silver peso. It is a dreadful descent, but I am still Treasurer, and a careful man. There is still, I thank Heaven, a plain living to be made even out of the Republic of Vincosta."





BRO' BEDINGER'S BAPTIZIN'*

BY JENNIE BROOKS

BEDINGER lay a-dying. This contingency surprised no one more than himself. That his long, and what could not truthfully be called commendable, life was rounding to a period, was matter for serious consideration. For weary weeks Bedinger had "rastled wid de fevah," as Aunt Chloe said, but all her cosseting and coddling went for naught—the old man's life lines had apparently run their length, and to-day he lay a-dying.

Bedinger's mules and Bedinger had for many years been indivisible, but since the illness of their master the pair "He-haw-ed" vainly from the outlying field. Though reveling in unwonted idleness and luxurious grazing, they yet missed the accustomed hand that alternately prodded and beat them in rhythmical accord with the string of hair-raising oaths that, in his old age, slipped as easily over his lips as had his mother's milk in the innocence of his baby days. How long he had owned his mules was mere speculation, for they were as time-haggled as their owner, who was "eighty odd."

Tall he was, and very thin, his bushy white hair standing out about his ears in the crisp kinks pertaining to his race; shaggy white eyebrows beneath which peered out twinkling black eyes humorously evil. No matter what his occupation he invariably appeared in an old silk hat shabby to the utmost degree, and about it were twisted several bands of sunburned crepe, in remembrance of his various partners on life's road; a long, tattered gray overcoat hung to his gaping shoes in winter, and summer saw him airily attired in linen duster, an

*Written for Short Stories.

inheritance "fohm my ole mah'steh." Always a whip in his hand, always swearing at his mules—that was Bedinger.

Each morning he backed his prototype of an express wagon up to the back doors of the "gre't houses" and carried away the garbage. This was a time of excitement to onlookers, for expectant interest held them as to the length, the variety and the vigor of the "cuss-words" Bedinger found necessary to get the mules into convenient place, the animals themselves turning back listening ears until the climax was reached and then moving placidly up to the barrels. Drinking, swearing, loafing, telling marvelous tales of "times befo' de wah," supported by his thrifty wife—or wives, for as one gave out he quickly supplied her place with another, rearing "batches an' batches of chillum, yaas, 'um, fah to tak' cyah of me w'en I gets ole"—this was the Bedinger known to the plantation part of the town, and, indeed, "white folks' town," also.

But Bedinger dying, Bedinger entering on another sphere of existence, minus mules, children and wives, was so startling an innovation of long-established custom as to be unbelievable.

Then, Bedinger in heaven! Now, what could Bedinger do in paradise? Would his tongue so skilled in anathemas turn with facility to angelic chorus singing? That he preferred not to locate permanently in a place where are possibly those of his ilk, was evinced by his tardily expressed wish for a "baptizin'."

Pah'son Beaconball shook his head dubiously when the request was brought to him, but considering the weakened condition of the old man, deemed it unadvisable to try coaching him on the doctrines, and after a short interview, during which Daddy Bedinger declared emphatically he "Wouldn't have no baptizin' wid de cup—no, sah! Got to wash me fa'h an' cleahn," he decided to forego all formalities and trust to the future—a future world, as Bedinger's opportunity for good works was curtailed.

There were great preparations to be made. The invalid could not bear a journey to the creek that he might be submerged, and it would require a deal of water to wash away the accumulated soil, bodily and spiritually, of so many years.

Pah'son Beaconball and his elders gathered in solemn conclave 'neath the little whitewashed porch. It was hardly a porch, only an extension of the low cabin roof out over the

great gray flagstones where the "locuses" cast flickering shadows and where masses of the pink wild rose swung from the lichened eaves. On splint-bottomed chairs they sat and consulted in subdued tones.

"He mighty low down wid de fevah, an' no mistake," argued the Pah'son, "an' how we all gwine baptize him out de baid, dis niggah don' know! Dah's no use circumlocutin' 'bout de mattah; but dis heah, my bredren, gwine be mighty hah'd feh to enack."

"Den he mighty long man feh to lif'," ruminated Brother Roseberry, "dough he ain't no mo' 'dan skin an' bone dese days. An' he cain't go to de run, an' de run cain't be tookened to him—an' whah we gwine get de tub what'll hole him? dat's what I qui'in' into."

"Lessen we tote him to de run in de ole slop-waggin. Now how dat do, Pah'son?" asked Brother Oliver. "Ef we don' do hit dat-a-way we ain't gwine git his ting done nohow."

"Dat's de ve'y thing I was projeckin'," answered the Pah'son, "but de doctah say ef we put him in de waggin an' jolt him roun' he gwine die right off, suah!"

Mammy Sauls at this moment came through the doorway, seeking relief from the stifling atmosphere of the sick-room. Fanning her shiny black face with her blue apron, she announced:

"He wan' de baptizin' pow'ful bad, he do. He fa'h doatin' on it. Times he babbles to hissef 'bout de cool watah, wen he dozin', 'times he 'wake he look at me out he dim ole eye wid a sparkle in 'em lak he dun chucklin' to hissef in de qua'est way, 'tel I 'clah I don' know ef he fit feh de baptizin' yit o' no."

"We mus' tek 'im on trus', Sis't Sauls, tek 'im on trus'," piously answered Pah'son Beaconball; "he ain' been to say 'zactly Chrishunfied in de life he been livin', but de Chu'ch gwine tek in ennyboddy dat sorry feh de sins, Sis't Sauls; dat gwine do de bizness—do de bizness all right," and the Pah'son carefully turned his attention to imaginary flecks of dust on his ecclesiastical garments.

"Well, Pah'son, jes' as you say," agreed Sis't Sauls, "but whatever yo'all gwine do wid him yo' mus' do mighty quick. De ole man sinkin' fas'."

"Sis't Sauls, it's dis-a-way: We cain't tek 'im to de run, no, sah, an' he sot hisself 'gainst de bowl baptizin'. He too gre't

a man feh to put in de tub, an' ouah quan'dry is how we gwine get de watah on 'im."

As he spoke in slow perturbation the distant mules came nearer and nearer, until they reached the old snake fence that separated the cabin garden from the field. It was noon, and the early summer day under the flooding sunshine held all the warmth of mid-July. A tender haze of green spread over the low-lying hills that successively unrolled themselves to the north of the cabin. In the dooryard the grass grew thick and green between flowerbeds of every size and shape, all glowing with rich color. Petunias, verbenas, "sweet William" phlox and "pineys" crowded together in riotous blossoming, and on the south side of the cabin, tall white lilies shone out. Daddy's thrifty wife had a "knack" with flowers. "If I stuck de broomstick in de loam it sho' would blossom out," she proudly said. And so it seemed, and mighty loath was Daddy to leave his little world that lay all smiling in the sun.

Pickaninnies, big and little, tumbled about the garden chasing yellow butterflies or, perchance, taking more soberly the exit of "Daddy" or "Gran'daddy," as the case might be, perched in solemn row on the fence, pictures of white-eyed wonderment. Such a peaceful day, and Daddy lay dying. From the little kitchen there spread upon the air an appetizing odor of frying chicken, ham boiling and other good things incompatible with a baptizin'.

Just inside the latticed window was the bed of Bedinger, and here he dozed dreamily. Occasionally in waking moments he remembered hazily that something was about to happen—was it dying? No; baptizin', that must come first. He did not feel especially interested or worried, but he knew everybody had it, and to him, bordering on celestial realms, it was also a necessity. Lying thus, there suddenly penetrated to his semi-consciousness a new idea. It was born of the pleasant fragrance which tickled his nostrils, and he roused himself, sniffing eagerly. The olfactory nerves handed on the message to his impoverished stomach, which transmitted it to his brain, and stirred in old Bedinger a mighty longing for one more taste of the fat things of this earth. His lagging tongue slowly stammered out the words:

"Sabe us! but I—s—pow'—ful hongry. Dat—ar'—po'k—seem lak—'des—de thing—feh me."

In an instant Wife No. 4 was at his side with a cup of broth and a spoon.

"You, 'Lias!" she cried, looking upon him as upon one almost across the dark river, "you lay low! Tek a tas' ob dis broff, honey," advancing the spoon. The gray head on the pillow turned away from her.

"No," murmured Daddy, "I cain't—tek dat. Fo' massy's sak'—gi' me des a leetle tas' ob de po'k."

Aunt Chloe looked at him reproachfully.

"'Lias," she answered firmly, emphasizing her remarks with the spoon, "yo' cain't hab dat po'k, no way 't all! Yo' know dat ham cookin' feh de fun'el, an' yo' des cain't hab it nohow!"

"Feh—de—fun'el!" Daddy was broad awake now and prepared to resent the affront. "Feh—who—fun'el? Feh my fun'el? Don' I know dat? Den if I's—de fun'el—I gwine—be mighty—dis'pint-ed if I don'—get none! Who got bet-tah right dan me? Chloe, honey, dat ar'—po'k gwine h—e'p me mightly wid de baptizin'—if yo' giv' t' to me," and he looked so imploringly at Chloe that her heart softened.

"Sis't Sauls," she called, and when Sis't Sauls came, she made known the situation.

"Daddy honin' atter dat po'k what we cookin' feh de dinner w'en dey come back f'um de fun'el; an', though it mighty small ham an' won't sca'cely go roun' nohow ('specially if Brudder Roseberry fotch his us'al emptiness wi' him), I 'spect he got to hab his dyin' 'quest grat'fied."

Scandalized at such behavior on the part of the quasi-deceased, Sis't Sauls was far from willing to humor Daddy, but Chloe overruled her objections, and in a short time Bedinger was swallowing slowly and with gusto the first slice of his own funeral baked meats.

Outside, the Pah'son and the brethren idly watched the thirsty mules as they drank greedily. Suddenly a light shone in the eyes of the preacher.

"My country!" he exclaimed, "dat's de va' thing, s'cusin' ob de Chu'ch; but w'en a man got sumpin' to do what he cain't do, den he got to do de way dat he kin do. Wid yo' all permission we baptize Bro' Bedinger in de hoss trough wha' de mules is squenchin' ob deir thirst!"

The problem was solved, and in a little time the dividing fence was down that free access might be had to the long

hollow log that, supported by cross-sticks, served for a drinking place. The water was quickly emptied out, and after a thorough cleaning the trough was filled with cool, blue, well water, and left in readiness for the submergence. Chloe alone objected to the arrangement on the score of the water being too cold; but, assured that warm water would be added at the proper time, finally acquiesced, and all things looked to a happy issue for the baptizin'.

News spreads quickly among the colored population, and the baptizin', set for half-past two in the afternoon, was soon known. Shortly after dinner groups of men and women, in their best garments, were climbing the hill and going down on the other side to the cabin, where lay Daddy Bedinger. Mammies black as ebony, in gay bandannas of scarlet and yellow; mammies in new print dresses and long white aprons, white turbaned under their sunbonnets, or in the newly widowed, with sunbonnets flaunting a yard of rusty crepe—each and all indulging in that solace of antebellum days, a corn-cob pipe. Following came the younger women pushing baby-carriages or leading by the hand little giggling black children, delighted at an outing of any nature—dissolution, abso-lution—it was all one to them. Down the long hill they trooped, joined from time to time by the nearer neighbors, making a picture of old plantation times. On either side of the sandy road the cabins lay in the slanting western light of mid-afternoon, the gardens were running over with flowers, and each roof of lichened logs bore a fragrant burden of blossoming vines. Not the starry, heavy perfumed yellow jasmine of the far South, but graceful cucumber vines with their delicate sprays; wisteria just coming into purple bloom, Virginia creeper with its scarlet trumpets and swinging its blushing branches from every fence corner, the omnipresent sweet-brier rose.

As they walked, the old plantation melodies rose in subdued tones to their lips, and singing softly they neared the cabin. From the house down to the baptizin' place they formed in two respectful lines, between which would pass the procession.

In place of promptly causing his death, the "fun'el ham" seemed to have had a salubrious effect on Bedinger, as he was now sleeping more quietly than for many weeks. The little coterie of elders and their pastor filed into the low-ceiled

room and, leaning tenderly over Daddy, Chloe whispered gently:

"Daddy, Daddy, ain't yo' had yo' sleep out, honey? De Pah'son come feh to baptize yo'. Wake up, honey, we gwine lif' yo' out de baid now an' put yo' in de watah."

Daddy stirred lazily, opening tranquil eyes on the assembled company.

"W'at yo' gwine do wid me?" he queried sleepily, "I don't wan' no watah."

"Day come baptize yo', honey. Is yo' fu'gittin' all 'bout dat?"

The preacher stepped forward interrupting:

"We come, Bro' Bedinger, to baptize yo' undah de dockyments ob de Chu'ch. Yo' been—yo' is a po' mizzable sinnah, but time we done submerge yo', yo' gwine come out way fohm all ob yo' transgressions, yo' gwine come out all w'ite lak snow."

As the preacher talked Aunt Chloe had been preparing Daddy for the immersion, wrapping him in sundry shawls, quilts and blankets, and now a bright handkerchief tied hastily about his head gave to him a look gaily debonair. His twinkling eyes and generally refreshed appearance told that his antemortem meal was doing good work, and that Daddy began to feel himself equal to even greater emergencies than a "baptizin'."

"Ready?" asked the Pah'son, and receiving affirmative nods, he added:

"Yo' all des lif' him in de sheet. De watah will be good and wah'm f'ohm de pot, an' I des saunter long in front, an' yo' come long slow-lak in de back."

With these words he started. Big Daniel, Bro' Oliver, Elder Roseberry, Deacon Allbaw and the Taylor twins laboriously lifted the old man from the bed and carried him out of doors. Though not an easy task it was performed with the most tender care, for Daddy was well liked, his good nature, his ready willingness to help a neighbor in distress (if he could long enough stay sober) had made for him a warm corner in the hearts of his friends.

As the procession entered the aisle formed for it, those on either side began singing, the leader of the choir changing the words to suit the occasion, and the crowd joining in the chorus:

Oh de Baptis' chu'ch is de onliest chu'ch,
 An' heah dey wash 'em clean,
 Sence Noah in de ark, ye brudders all hark!
 Sech a powah of watah nebber seen.

Chorus—Sof'ly—sof'ly—in de watah
 Sof'ly lay him down,
 In de bosom ob de wave, we come to lave
 Dis sinnah in de clean w'ite gown.

He ole an' he swah, an' he oft' declah
 De baptizin' ain' no good,
 But hah'd sickness come to de black man's home
 So he des do de bes' he could.

Sof'ly—sof'ly—in de watah
 Lay him sof'ly down,
 In de cleah, cole wave we come to lave
 Dis darkey in his clean w'ite gown.

When he nebber can walk, o' he sca'ce can talk,
 We tote him along fuh sho',
 And de folk gadder in, to quit him ob his sin,
 So he nebber hab to wash no mo'.

Sof'ly—sof'ly—in de watah
 Sof'ly lay him down,
 De debbil am cheat—de debbil am beat,
 Dis darkey gwine git a crown.

Groans, ejaculations, sobs and crying followed, and the bearers having reached the improvised font, they thankfully rested their burden on the edge of the trough. Aunt Chloe and Sis't Sauls hastily removed the outer covering, and as the crowd closed in about Daddy it freely commented on his emaciated appearance. Truth to tell, he really looked brighter than they had expected, even though much changed from the vigorous old man they had so long known. To be the bright particular star of a baptizin' was exhilarating to him, and the pitying exclamations that resounded on all sides:

"Lawd! he look pow'ful po'ly!" "He do fo' suah!" "Daddy don swah he las' swah, I reckon!" "Po' ole Daddy! las' time he see de sun drap!" "Dis heah is a hah't-break fo' po' Chloe!" All this was as a balm of Gilead to the soul already puffed up with pride at the importance of his dying estate. Pah'son Beaconball began his oration:

"Frien's an' bredren, we come all ob us togedder dis day feh to baptize dis sinnah an' enjoin him to de Chu'ch. He wat come befo' yo' is a sinnah—'scusin' ob de fam'ly—a mizzable sinnah, de va' mizzablest who have yet a gre't honin' fuh de watah ob de baptizin'. He hav' liv' befoh yo' eighty yeahs an' mo', he hav' stole, he hav' swah, he hav'—— Lawd, if I tarries to tell you' all de things he done I nevah gwine get 'im in de tub dis day! He done ebery thing he ought to hav' lef' undone, an' de things he done—yo' mus' 'scuse me fohm mentioning. Dis day, at las', almos' at de las' blowin' ob de ho'n, he say he sorry. He say he 'penting ob his sins, an' w'at we do den? Why, we trus' him! we trus' him! We take 'im on trus'. De watah am now ready, and now——"

Here came an interruption from Sis't Sauls, who bustled up with a steaming kettle of water in either hand:

"Wait, fuh de Lawd's sake, tel' I het de watah a leetle mite! Daddy done chill mighty easy dese days, an' if we put 'im in cole he done die in de trough—an' dem fool mules drink 'emselfs to deff, 'case Daddy's han't always gwine hang ober it—an' dey seekin', seekin' fuh Daddy all de time. sence he lay low" (as she talked she busily poured the water in). "Thah!" she said, dipping in her hand, "dat all right—twis' 'im in," and before Pah'son Beaconball could interfere down into the tepid depths Daddy was swung by his attendants. The water did not cover him, as the trough was shallow, being hollowed from the trunk of an oak, and the assistance of Aunt Chloe, Sis't Sauls and even the Pah'son was required to apply the water to every part of Bedinger that he might rejoice in a real "Baptis' baptizin'."

As they diligently worked, from across the field came the sound of awkward trotting feet, and above the excited singing, crying and shouting that attended the submerging process, was heard a long, musical "He—haw! he—haw!" and as the people scattered before the newcomers both of Daddy's old servants, the devoted mules, pressed up toward him, overjoyed at seeing the master once more.

"He—haw!" came loudly as Deacon Roseberry tried vainly to drive them away.

"Who dat?" and behold, Daddy revived by the plunge bath, rising to a sitting posture:

"Hi, Ginger!" he piped weakly, "yo' ole fool, wha' fuh yo' crowdin' Jumbo? Yo' al'ays wan' be fust! Back, dah—back,

dah, yo' ole—— Lawd! I jes' stop myse'f in time! Cla'h furgot I jes' ben baptize! Ca'y me back to de cabin," and he leaned languidly against the broad breast of Chloe as she slipped her arms about his dripping shoulders. "Ca'y me back, I gwine get well fohm dis day!" a prophecy strongly attested by the kindling spark in his eyes, which said death and Daddy had parted company for this time at least.

The consternation of the multitude about him was as great as if he had risen from the grave. To the colored people it seemed a miraculous intervention in Bedinger's behalf. Wrapping him well in the blankets, the men carried him quickly into the cabin, where the dying sunlight was drawing shadowy shapes from every corner. They rubbed him dry, dressed him in a fresh garment, and laid him between the lavender-scented sheets Aunt Chloe had hastily put on. Quite docilely he swallowed the "broff" she held to his lips, and as he settled comfortably on the pillow he drowsily chuckled:

"Dat fun'al ham don' de bizness, dat an' de washin'! Ain't ben wash all ober sence befo' de wah!"

In two weeks Daddy was sitting out under the "locuses," and within the month was again swinging the whip over the backs of his mules to the same rythmical accompaniment—for his "baptizin'," as you know, was not wholly accomplished.





AN OLD BACHELOR'S DIARY*

BY EDOUARD ROD

GENEVA, October 10, 18—.

TO-DAY we found ourselves alone once more at the table —Mme. Minier, her daughter Angelica, Miss Batson and myself—the last of the summer boarders having just left for Italy. I have always envied those people who pass their lives in traveling about the world, seeking cool breezes in summer and a warm sun in winter. If I ever possess a handsome income I shall do as they do, perhaps. It is quite certain that I shall never have the opportunity of deciding, as the canton of Geneva offers little chance for accumulating a fortune. Then, too, I have other reasons for remaining where I am. I have set habits and I am the spoiled child of the house. I see file before me people of all kinds and nationalities, thus giving me the illusion of a perpetual tour of the world.

During the last eight years I have seen English, Russian, French and German women, beautiful and ugly, young and old, melancholy, sentimental, gay or adventurous, sometimes noble and poor, sometimes rich and miserly; in short, the multiple varieties of the feminine species as it flourishes in Europe. I have also had opportunities for forming some acquaintance with the women of the other continents — America and Australia, for instance. The women of the United States suggest the English, resembling them as an emancipated daughter resembles a mother. The women from South America are rare, and it is a pity, for they are ravish-

*Translated by H. Twitchell, from the French, for Short Stories.

ing to behold. As for Africa, it has been represented here but once in the person of a negress, the wife of a Spaniard. I know Asia as yet only by the Japanese, but men do not count in giving one an idea of a country.

The changes of the season alone are difficult to endure. In the first place, they are disagreeable in our climate; secondly, the house is empty, and I detest that. I have a feeling of desolation at seeing the long table deserted, to say nothing of the bill of fare, which undergoes economical and injurious modifications and from which I should really suffer if Miss Batson did not suffer so much more than I. Hearing her grumble consoles me for the poor dishes Mme. Minier serves up with imperturbable coolness as soon as we are, as she affectionately says, "en famille."

To-day, the first of our solitude, Miss Batson made a superb entrance into the dining-room. On seeing the table deserted, she began by drawing a long sigh of relief:

"Oh, I am so glad those dreadful people are all gone."

She makes this same remark every year at this time. Then she noticed that the soup was thin. She gave a second sigh, not of relief this time, and said, looking at me:

"You see the era of stews has begun."

To tease her I replied:

"I do not dislike stews, I am sure; especially since Mme. Minier makes very good ones."

Then her roseola passed from purple to violet and she gave me a dreadful look, while Mme. Minier's face expressed her gratitude. This lady always excites my sympathy at such times. She is a very deserving person, who has managed her affairs very well, since she was left a penniless widow with a little child. As I saw her anxious gaze wander around the tables, I said by way of consolation:

"It is just the same every fall!"

"Yes; that is true," she replied; "but one can never tell what the future will bring."

Miss Batson was silent and pouting. When she saw a stew appear in which the remains of last night's roast were plainly recognizable, she could not help exclaiming:

"Ah, the scraps! I told you so. I detest scraps, for my part. In England we never eat them, we give them to the servants!"

To please Mme. Minier again I replied:

"When the gravy is good they are very well!"

Then Miss Batson became excited in earnest. Her roseola paled suddenly, and it was doubtless a wave of bile that gave her a salmon tint for a few seconds. She cried, brandishing her fork:

"Yes, yes; you men are all alike! You do not care for the foundation or the substance. The sauce is all you want! Now, Monsieur Nantout, I understand your admiration for Mademoiselle Laurence, with whom——"

"Mademoiselle Laurence was really a charming person, dear Miss Batson," said *Mme. Minier*.

"Don't talk to me about that girl, I beg of you! Her toilettes, to be sure, were well enough, and she had sweet manners and phrases—all dust to cast in men's eyes! She was exactly like the dish you have just served—scraps, with a savory dressing. It is fortunate that men are so easily contented!"

It always irritates me when Miss Batson attacks men in general. I replied with a show of spirit:

"Mademoiselle Laurence was really very charming. I regret her very much. But I hope that others quite as charming will come this winter. Does that shock you? What can I do? You will not permit me to pay court to you, so I must console myself as best I can."

These little quarrels with Miss Batson are my sole distractions when the house is empty. But they have been going on for eight years, and I am beginning to weary of them. I detest that old maid! With her continual tirades against men she fills me with a horror of the whole sex.

I have succeeded in keeping myself free from the embarrassments of a family and other exactions that hamper the existence of so many men. I make for myself all sorts of little pleasures that make me love life. In this boarding-house, where there is nearly always some agreeable guest, I find a thousand opportunities for enjoying the best of women—their grace and charm. Miss Batson is the only cloud in my sky. She is a large, black cloud, to be sure; but I force myself to accept her with resignation, thanking Providence for having chosen her among all the afflictions He might have sent. But, even amidst these reflections, I cannot help admiring the wisdom of His decrees. Old maid and old bachelor, we are destined to live together. I, to complete the souring of her disposition, while serving as a safety-valve for her ill-

humor; she to inflict upon me the annoyance that by right belongs to every human being, and to disturb my peace as it is proper that it should be disturbed.

When strangers are there I see but little of her. Really, when my income is assured I think I shall live with Miss Batson; without her, I should be too happy, and thus be in danger of attracting misfortunes upon my head!

October 26.

Once more the house is full, the table better supplied, Miss Batson more spiteful, Mme. Minier busy and satisfied. During meals we have the jargon of Babel.

First, there are three Scotch women—a mother and her two daughters; the mother has long teeth and a dog-like demeanor; the daughters, who are twins, have the pretty names Annie and Lottie. They are fair-haired, bright and engaging, and just sixteen! If they were only ten years older—but what am I thinking about? There are already in the world any number of young ladies nearing spinsterhood, who are dissatisfied with this arrest of their destinies and who try to combat it with all the ruses and combinations possible. Since I have been at Mme. Minier's, not a year has passed without seeing one of these at the table beside me. There have even been three, which was one too many. This year there is the happy mean—there are two. Two are just enough to create a jealousy, with the little scenes it provokes, the intrigues, and the emulation needed to make matters interesting. With me the dear creatures do not risk much, for it is against my principles to give myself up to entanglements, the consequences of which cannot be foreseen. I am honest and prudent, and I have never had occasion to reproach myself for indiscretion. Events shape themselves. I find my bits of pleasure, knowing perfectly well that when things become too serious, the close of the season brings all to an end. To be frank, I must acknowledge that these inevitable farewells always cause me a certain emotion. But that emotion is not destitute of charm, and I have so few in my monotonous existence that I make a pleasure for myself out of waiting for the periodical return of this one.

Of my two friends this season one, Mme. Aubanon, calls herself a widow, and is one perhaps. She is French, and possesses the particular charm belonging to the women of her

country. Her only beauty lies in her eyes and in her expressive little hands. She has a slight uneasiness of manner, a feverishness—"nerves," Miss Batson says scornfully. She has taken no one into her confidence, and no one knows who she is. She dresses tastefully, even elegantly; but she carefully avoids all extra expenditure.

The other, Claire Sandrin, is the daughter of a country preacher, and has been an orphan for some time. She has a small fortune, and is intelligent and well educated. She attends lectures and classic concerts, carries books around under her arm; but, in spite of all, owing to her beautiful blond hair, her fathomless eyes, the arch smile that lights up her face, she is fascinating and interesting. I have forgiven her for having decided opinions on too many subjects. I know perfectly well what will come of these friendships; my expectations do not bid fair to be realized at once, however. I have a rival!

A handsome man he is, too. He is of about my age, but larger and more robust, with a pointed mustache and a military air. Self-possessed and very entertaining in conversation, he has many signal advantages over me. He calls himself a Hungarian baron, and I must confess that he worries me.

The other boarders are a German pianist, M. Vogel (a music teacher come here in search of pupils). What an aberration! Geneva already resembles a music-box, and I doubt if there is on any floor of any house a human being capable of touching a piano who is not provided with a professor. A Danish couple, a little old man and woman, who are constantly chirping to each other in their incomprehensible language. Every morning I hear them repeating French grammar together in their room, but they seem to get little profit out of it.

Lastly, there is a captain of the Salvation Army, who says her prayers before and after meals, her eyes on the ceiling, and her flat chest inflated with sighs. She converses with no one except Miss Batson, the only one of the company, doubtless, whom she thinks in a condition to receive grace.

This completes the personnel of the establishment. On running through my past diaries, I find none recording such a variety of types. The season promises to be interesting, and I expect my little kaleidoscope to turn satisfactorily.

"Well, Monsieur Nantout, which of the two is it to be?" inquired Mme. Minier as usual.

"Tut! tut!"

"Both, then? Ah, what a man! We shall never succeed in marrying you off!"

The contradictory sentiments of Mme. Minier with regard to my hypothetical marriage contributes not a little to brightening my dull existence. On the one hand, she has a desperate fear that I will marry, since in that case she would lose her most faithful patron. On the other hand, a match made in a boarding-house is one of the very best of advertisements, and in her imagination she sees rushing to her house all those persons, more or less young, who travel about, hoping to leave their single blessedness on the way somewhere. As for me, I amuse myself with exciting first one sentiment then the other. I ask her advice, I pretend to be smitten and perplexed. This is one of my little pleasures. It is all the more enjoyable because it costs nothing.

November 8.

For several days past extraordinary things have been going on between Mme. Aubanon and the Baron. This Magyar has completely bewitched the little widow, after having first made advances to Claire, which were summarily repulsed. There are side-talks in corners, sly escapades, understanding looks; in brief, the whole of a mysterious but perfectly transparent comedy.

One day I met them on the bridge. She blushed at seeing me. His face wore an expression of fine scorn. I divined the villain's thoughts. On my return, I mentioned the meeting to Mme. Minier, but that lady does not like to hear any one speak disrespectfully of her boarders, especially when they have a title and wear a decoration.

"You are jealous, Monsieur Nantout," she said curtly.

The day ended in confusion. No one knew exactly what had happened. The Scotch misses, their dog-like mother, the Danish couple and the German pianist rolled their eyes in amazement during dinner. Miss Batson, in an endeavor to make me talk, did me the honor of saying to me privately, with a confidential air:

"Well, the Baron has gone!"

"Gone?"

"Yes; and without bidding any one farewell."

"Perhaps that is the custom in Hungary. You know, politeness varies according to climate."

"Don't jest ; something must have happened."

"What makes you think so? People come and go. What is more natural?"

Claire also seemed to perceive something. In the evening, when all were assembled in the parlor as if in expectation of some vague happening, she said to me in a low tone :

"The end came suddenly ; don't you think so?"

"What end?" I inquired in seeming astonishment.

"Don't feign ignorance. The Baron has gone——"

"I see that he has ; but——"

"And poor Mme. Aubanon has no watchchain, nor purse, probably."

Where did the charming girl get all her worldly wisdom, I wonder?

November 15.

This misadventure kept the house in excitement for a whole week. Mme. Aubanon and Mme. Minier held counsel as to whether or not they should make a complaint, and they found as many good reasons on one side as on the other. At last it was considered best to drop the matter, and at present the usual equilibrium is gradually being re-established. The secret having been kept successfully, the curious have at last resigned themselves to ignorance.

As for the interested principal, she has turned all her attentions to me at the table, quite spoiling me. I accept them all, and Miss Batson's nose fairly blazes. The Danish couple look at me inquisitively, exchanging observations in their own language. Claire looks on with her usual cool, intelligent expression. What does she think? She does not offer me quarters of oranges. She is too reserved for that, and yet her entire demeanor, her words, the tone of her voice, offer me a calm, reflective sympathy, with marriage in view, of course, as a possibility. With her the winter would pass tranquilly, but the widow worries me. She is too emotional. With women of her temperament, one never can tell what to expect. I must be on my guard.

November 22.

Forty-five years old to-day ! It does not seem possible. I flatter myself that I do not show my age, however. I still have all my hair ; my beard has not begun to turn gray, and there are but two barely perceptible wrinkles on my forehead. These give character to my face instead of making me

look old. That is what comes of living a life exempt from care!

Yes; I can say, with a certain pride, that I have escaped much of the worriment that devours human existence and makes it end prematurely in hideous maladies. An only child, left an orphan early, I wisely invested my little patrimony, and it has always brought me a reasonable income. I have always been able to be independent, and if my position should prove annoying, I could drop it without much inconvenience. I see my old schoolmates, the friends of my youth, dragging heavy burdens about like the balls of convicts. Some are slaves to their passions—drink, politics, riches enslave others—I know nothing of all that. I lay down my pen a moment to reflect on my happiness. It is complete, but negative. And, as I dream, a far-away remembrance comes back to me. I was nineteen, and wore the green cap of a student of “*belle-lettres*”; I was not then the prudent man I have since become. She was about my own age, a fair-haired, pale, graceful girl, with the snow-like beauty and seriousness of the women of the North. Twice a week, on my way to classes, I met her accompanied by a maid, carrying a roll of music. One day she stopped me to ask for some information. She had a decided foreign accent, but such a sweet voice!

I grew red and stammered out the directions. Another time I found myself next to her at a concert, and we exchanged a few words; after that I ventured to bow to her. I felt myself being gradually possessed by a definite sentiment. I wanted to accomplish some great thing for her to prove my devotion; but one Saturday I failed to meet her. She had gone doubtless. I have ever since been devoted to foreigners.

At the present time things are quite different. I live between two figures that change every six months. I accept them, whatever they are, as a beggar accepts bread given him. They smile upon me and spoil me with those maternal attentions that women instinctively exhibit, from interested motives, of course. I see through their little calculations. I permit myself to be duped so that they will display themselves more fully, without disdaining any of the little pleasures they offer me; but I never, never have the desire to do heroic acts for them.

This will last five or six years yet, until my face shall betray my age, then I shall have to find other company. Mamma

of little girls, aunts, perhaps. It is the thought of this future that disquiets me. I am not even an uncle. I not only lack an object of affection, but also everything that could take the place of one, or furnish me with the illusion of one. Last year there was a little Russian girl of two here with her parents. She took a great fancy to me, running to meet me with outstretched arms, and we had great frolics together; but she went away, like the rest, and no departure ever grieved me so much.

Why should I seek to deceive myself? If I have shut out from my life all its cares, have I not also banished all its joys? At times I would even like to bear those burdens that seem so frightful to me when I see others bending under them, even at the risk of seeing my hair whiten and my wrinkles deepen! I should like to live for some one else beside myself, and have other emotions than those caused by passing human weaknesses. I no longer admire my wisdom, and I envy the folly of those people who do not weigh their acts, but who sometimes allow themselves to be influenced by the generous impulses of their hearts. If I live a secluded life, rarely visiting my friends, it is because I would suffer by comparing their lot in life to my own, their happy homes, where children laugh and which the tasteful hands of women have filled with beauty, to the dreary chamber where I have vegetated for the last eight years!

But what is the use of thinking of these things? It is too late now. I know that I must walk until the end of my life in the path I have chosen for myself. And I dream on, expressing by points ideas too vague for expression, then I close my diary and chase away my melancholy thoughts to repeat them at my next anniversary.

January 2.

Another rival has presented himself—an Italian this time, named Arnoldi, a handsome fellow, who may prove to be a dangerous competitor. He makes poetry, poses, tries to make himself noticed, and succeeds. He has attracted upon himself the solemn eyes of the Salvation Army captain, shocked Miss Batson and alarmed Mme. Minier. Mme. Aubanon is violently smitten with him, and we are fearful of having the episode of the "Baron" repeated. The poor little woman is really to be pitied. She will be fortunate if she is able to save what is left of her jewels!

January 31.

The blow has fallen! That pretty Mme. Aubanon has eloped with Arnoldi! Rumors of all sorts have been floating about for some days past, and a subdued excitement has hovered over the house. One could plainly see that the "captain" and Miss Batson have been arranging a formidable defense on the ground of morality. But the necessity is past. The birds have flown, and Miss Batson has taken her revenge on Mme. Minier by telling her that, if her friends in England knew to what company she was exposed, they would want her back with them, out of sight of such shocking examples!

March 4.

The storm has passed over and the house is again quiet. I am interested in Claire, but my attitude toward her is perfectly well understood. She knows that I am not matrimonially inclined, and she has accepted me just as I am. This is the third time that my flirtations have ended in this manner. The girl has too much good sense to dislike me because I am impregnable, and her conduct toward me does not change in the least. We chat together familiarly, and I occasionally accompany her to lectures, the theatre or a concert. Once, in a moment of confidence, she told me of her projects for the future.

"I look forward to spinsterhood," she said. "It is rather humiliating, of course (her eyes smiled reproachfully), and I know that it is not a woman's destiny. But I have made my mind up to it, and I shall arrange my life so that I shall reach the end without dogs and cats, and, perhaps, without being an object of ridicule.

"There are already many things that interest me, and I shall try to discover new ones. I have learned two consoling things from solitude—to know how to enjoy my own resources and to love my fellows." . . .

She said all this so sweetly and naturally that I was filled with affectionate admiration for her. A mere trifle might have made me forget myself and ask her to share my destiny. But I said nothing. I know too well how to resist my impulses. Perhaps I was wrong this time. It seems as if one ought to be happy with such a charming creature.

March 16.

The three Scotchwomen have gone. We are therefore almost "en famille" again, and, as Claire is not hard to please and the Danish couple are always satisfied, we are again served with the meals Miss Batson so despises. I scarcely notice it, however. Spring is approaching, and I know that it is going to rob me of that friendship that is becoming so dear to me, and I am profiting by my last days. Many others in my place would not find themselves too old to change their mode of life. I even try to picture to myself what my existence would be like in company with this amiable woman, whose quiet activity would make home-life delightful. But, no; too many fears present themselves. I lack the resolution to come to a decision. My dreams will end with the first warm days. I am condemned to Miss Batson for life!

March 29.

Claire is going in three days. This evening we had a delightful talk. I was much affected, and I said to her:

"Why do you go?"

She replied in a resigned, but slightly sarcastic tone:

"Because I have set habits, too, and habits are sacred things, aren't they, for an old maid as well as for an old bachelor? I pass April with my married sister at Neuchâtel, and May with my brother at Lausanne. In the summer I go to the mountains with them. I have little nephews and nieces who are not yet old enough to anticipate my inheritance. Why should I deny myself the pleasure of being with them?"

"Will you come back next winter?" I asked hesitatingly.

She reflected a moment before replying.

"Perhaps—I cannot tell. I have enjoyed myself here; but I may go to Italy."

Three days more! Three days more! There is still time.

April 1.

It is over. She has gone, like so many others. At breakfast there were only the Danish couple. It was the same as if we were alone, and Miss Batson exclaimed, as usual, with a sigh of relief:

"They are all gone at last!"

When the maid brought in the entrée, she added :

"The era of stews has begun, and it will be a long one this time."

A silence followed, broken only by the prattle of the Danes ; then Mme. Minier remarked that the season this year had been short, and had ended too soon to please her. This time I could say nothing to console her.



THE HEAD OF THE CLASS*

BY EMERSON GIFFORD TAYLOR



HEAR you're giving a very successful course, Latimer. Your Lyrical Poetry, I mean." It was Gildersleeve who spoke from the deepest arm-chair in Latimer's study.

"Yes; they do seem interested. I'm lucky, though, in having a small class. And they're all graduates, too, you know."

"Any women?"

"Four. They're not up to much, though. They try hard enough, but they won't see that liking a poem doesn't constitute a full proof of its excellence. They won't argue."

Latimer leaned back in his chair, and drew a long breath from his pipe. It was the hour of all the day most enjoyed by him, and he was unwilling to interrupt by any discussion the light noise of the fire and the regular ticking of the clock. Gildersleeve remembered this, hearing his friend's impatient sigh, and quietly drew back his seat from the circle of light about the fireplace, fading unobtrusively into the general darkness.

Latimer had long before discovered that his room never showed to such advantage as when the lamp was turned low, and a few embers glowed dully behind the twisted andirons. At such a time the low ceiling with the cherished beams seemed to silently withdraw. The tiny points of light in the mirror shone as from the end of a long gallery, and the crowding, wavering shadows that lurked above the bookcases and in the corners of the place made mysteriously wide and spacious that which by daylight Latimer found too narrow to comfortably accommodate at once his papers, his big writing

*Written for Short Stories.

table and himself. A great many people felt ill at ease there of an evening, but Latimer's room suited him exactly, and by degrees his friends had come to enjoy it also, with all its peculiarities. They liked to drop in when the night was well advanced, and the water in the kettle had commenced singing.

It was some minutes before Latimer spoke, and then :

"That Miss McKenna's a bright girl," he said, refilling his pipe. "Wasn't she under you last year?"

"Red-haired person with queer spectacles?" This after a pause, for Gildersleeve found it hard to remember individual members of his classes.

"Yes. She came from some small college out West, I believe. She's doing so well I think I'll recommend her for a fellowship."

There was a stir in the darkness, and Gildersleeve's face and hands appeared in the firelight.

"You don't say so!" he exclaimed, setting down his glass. "Endowed or university?"

"Oh, the Merivale, of course. The others aren't worth much. She——"

"She's a splendid bit of evidence in favor of your methods, Latimer, if that's the case. I tried and could do nothing with her."

There was no immediate answer, but Latimer's pipe glowed more brightly for an instant. A long cloud of smoke stole from his side of the room, to turn rosy in the glow of the fire before whisking up the chimney.

"My only objection to her is that she writes. Poetry, you know, and very bad poetry, too."

The visitor laughed. "Does she come to consult?" he asked.

"They all do, when they're attacked that way; but she's a harder subject to handle than most—she's so simple. Her confidence in my judgment's highly embarrassing."

"You've done mighty well to get anything out of her, I think," said Gildersleeve, yawning, and feeling for his coat and hat. "Good night," he added, his voice now coming from the blackness near the door. "I'm glad you've a candidate for a fellowship, at any rate. My classes are stupider than any I've had in years."

"Gildersleeve was very generous to-night," murmured Latimer, covering the fire with ashes. "I was afraid he was

going to discuss pedagogy in detail. Poor Sarah McKenna! He probably scared her to death last year."

One of the youngest members of the Winchester faculty, Latimer was nevertheless considered by many as perhaps the ablest teacher in that corps of scholars. Only a very few are naturally endowed with that peculiar tact and sensitive skill which enable an instructor to interpret his general remarks for the benefit of each individual on the seats before him, and Latimer possessed this God-given talent in a marked degree. And it was for this reason that Miss Sarah McKenna had made such flattering progress during the months she had been a member of his class. At any rate, that is what Latimer told himself, and felt modestly complacent. As Gildersleeve had said, she was a good advertisement of his teaching powers.

"You're different, somehow," she told him on one occasion. The class had been dismissed, but Miss McKenna had lingered to seek out answers to some of the questions she was wont to write in the back of her notebook. Latimer smiled and leaned back in his chair. The girl's voice cut him like a knife, but he remarked inwardly that really she was not so bad-looking when she colored up.

"Now, this poetry," she continued rapidly. "I never cared much for poetry before, and it was just because I didn't know how to read it. It didn't mean much, you know; but now——"

Her pale eyes met his, and the speech, which Latimer had expected to hurry on, died on her lips.

"I'm very glad, Miss McKenna, I'm sure," said Latimer smoothly, noticing the girl's embarrassment. "There's a certain attitude of mind, I suppose, that one must acquire—if it doesn't exist naturally—before poetry can be properly appreciated—can mean much, as you say; and you're to be congratulated if you've fallen into it." His voice had instinctively taken on its professional tone, and Latimer hated himself for it, seeing the cloud on the thin, little face before the railing of his high desk. "I'm very glad, indeed—personally," he concluded with an attempt at enthusiasm.

At the word Miss McKenna looked up to him with a swift light of gratitude behind her glasses.

"You've opened a beautiful world to me, Professor," she said, blushing again and adjusting with nervous fingers some hair that straggled over her collar. "I want to thank you for it very much. And—and I'm going to prove how much I

value what you're showing to me—to all of us, I mean—every day." She turned away, not waiting his answer, and followed two other young women who were waiting impatiently for her by the door.

Latimer was used to being thanked. He always felt guilty, though, at receiving, without a protest, this the teacher's best reward. It was easy for him to win that for which his associates strove so hard and often despaired of obtaining. But this shabby little figure interested him, and he thought over what she had said to him with a feeling equally composed of pleasure and concern.

"Poor thing!" he remarked; "poor little thing!" Himself richly stored, he had been shocked by the girl's words as at a tale of physical distress and want. The most popular man of his circle, it was easy for him to sympathize with one who had made few friends during a year of university work. The long days among the dusty book stacks, and in the illy ventilated reading-room of the library; the tedious search, collation and annotation, where every hour brought in upon her the poverty of her equipment; the breathless, feeble attempts to arrange and express the crowding thoughts that beat upon her, and then the cheerless room at evening—all this Latimer saw expressed in the hungry look behind Miss McKenna's absurd tortoise-shell spectacles, as she scrawled her notes on his lectures, or questioned him, as just now, when the class had been dismissed. It was an appeal to which he could not but respond.

"She's just found out a new side to her nature," said Latimer, "and I'd be a rogue not to help her make the most out of it." He arranged the books on his desk, and rose, shaking his head. "It's very strange," he added, addressing his hat, "and a tremendous responsibility."

Because his superiors argued that he was young and therefore best fitted for the heartbreaking detail work of academic administration, Latimer was a very busy man. His courses, too, were all largely attended. It cost him many hours of night work to prepare against the score of searching questions that might come up during the next day's recitations. And, added to these calls, it must be remembered that much of Latimer's time and a large share of his best thought were expended on the letters he wrote every day to some one in the quiet seaboard city he called home.

Of this last fact Latimer did not speak to any one. He even carefully concealed the big photograph that stood on the mantel, whenever he heard a knock on the door of his study, for he and she had decided together that it would be best to keep their affair a secret until summer.

Latimer was very busy indeed. Truly it was much to his credit that he was apparently always ready to listen to those theories of life and of art which Miss McKenna discovered for herself day by day, and to sustain her hope on those occasions when another student would glibly correct her classroom blunders. More than that, he read, and with polite frankness commented on the copies of halting verse she was forever submitting to his inspection.

"A little more study in construction and form would do you a world of good," said Latimer, handing back her manuscript. The girl had stopped after class again, not heeding the whispers of her companions. Among themselves, these latter pronounced unbearable the attention and care bestowed by Dr. Latimer on his ungainly spectacled disciple from the Bad Lands.

"Construction and form," echoed Miss McKenna, indorsing the words on her poem's flyleaf. "Coleridge said that about Tennyson, didn't he? You don't mind looking over these things, I hope," she continued. "I sometimes feel——"

"Really, you mustn't say that, Miss McKenna. I'm always at your disposal. Nothing pleases us more than to have our students consult with us about every point connected with their work."

Latimer spoke very seriously, for he meant what he was saying. Then, too, he was confident that the girl was going to prove his prize pupil, and he wished to encourage her.

"You don't realize how gratifying to me personally your advance in scholarship has been," he added emphatically.

There was a pause while a man might breathe twice, and then Latimer stepped hastily down from his desk a little alarmed, and wholly glad that the door into the hallway was closed. Miss McKenna had dropped into a seat, and was crying bitterly, her cherished books scattered about the floor.

"It's nothing—it's nothing," she protested, stooping blindly after the pages of her poem. "Please don't mind. I—I'm a little overtried, I guess. But you're so—very kind, and I——"

She covered her face and sobbed passionately, Latimer

standing helplessly at her side. For the moment he regretted having ever voted to open the University's graduate courses to women.

"There, there," he said, touching her clumsily on the shoulder. "You mustn't—really, you know, you mustn't."

"Oh, but you don't understand—you can't see!" the other answered, raising her face; "and there's nobody who's tried so hard to learn, and all that—I've tried so hard. Oh, don't make me tell you outright that I——"

Latimer did not hear the end of the sentence, a fresh burst of sobs choking the girl's voice, and shaking her shoulders under the odd little coat.

"I assure you I do appreciate, and—and thank you for all you're doing, Miss McKenna," said Latimer hastily. "There's not a member of the class in whose success and welfare I'm as interested as I am in yours, if you'll allow me to say so. And I've told more than one person of your good work, and of my feeling for you—my hopes for your—your future, you know."

He paused with the teacher's dread of overpraising a pupil strong upon him. As he spoke the girl's sobs died away, and she rose to her feet very pale, but quite calm.

"You told?" she queried with a smile. And then, as Latimer stared blankly at her, "I'm glad you're pleased with me," murmured Miss McKenna.

It was very late. The fire in Latimer's study had burned low, while the lamp had gone out entirely. Save for the occasional bits of brightness that leaped into life, as the sudden blazing up of an ember was reflected in the mirror, the dull glow of Latimer's pipe and Gildersleeve's cigar was all that relieved the darkness of the little room. The two men had enjoyed a long silence—not the least blessing of close friendship—when the visitor spoke.

"Tell me more about your Miss McKenna," he said. "That was a mighty good paper she read last night at the club."

Latimer sighed. He had been passing the last few moments with her, and after that to discuss classroom excellence seemed unspeakably tedious.

"Miss McKenna? Oh, she's doing bravely. I never had a pupil who seemed to enjoy for its own sake the work I give out as much as she does. It's very encouraging."

"Work for its own sake?" asked the other lightly.

"Why, yes. She can't do much independent research yet,

but whatever I assign she tackles with really tremendous energy. I like to see it; but I'm afraid she'll overtax her strength. She cried the other day."

"Did, eh? Praised or blamed?"

"She seemed all broken up because I told her how well she was doing. And that makes it all the stranger."

"I'm not so sure about that. I don't think it was strange at all," Gildersleeve remarked bluntly; "in your case and hers. I mean, which is quite an unusual one," he added, a question in his voice.

"I'm glad to have interested her in English work," Latimer continued. He was smiling into his pipe, and did not heed the odd emphasis that his friend laid on his last words. "I confess it pleased me immensely to have her talk about the new world I'd opened to her. If she were anybody but Miss McKenna, I'd think she was trying to jolly me into a fellowship appointment. She doesn't think of that, though, I'm sure."

Gildersleeve laughed outright.

"Quite right. I don't believe she does, either. Are you going to reward her? Not that it's any of my business."

"If you think it would please her," Latimer answered readily. "I'd be glad to do anything I could, surely. I'm certainly considering her carefully."

"For the fellowship?"

"Why, yes, of course. What else?"

"What else, indeed?" repeated Gildersleeve, mending the dying fire, and smiling at the little blaze he succeeded in coaxing into life.

The academic year drew near its end. It had been given out that one of the vacant fellowships "would be awarded to a distinguished student of the English language or literature," and each professor made haste to recommend his best pupil. Gildersleeve alone presented no candidate, affirming that never had his graduate classes developed so little scholarship, or even aptitude for study at all. But with Latimer the case was different. He had half promised himself all along that only to Miss McKenna could his official approval be justly given, and her achievements during the closing weeks of the last term made his promise easy to keep.

"Confound her, though," said Latimer one day, as he mildly echoed the applause that greeted the conclusion of a classroom essay. "I'd recommend her a great deal more willingly

if she didn't bother me so with her eternal talk about herself. There's a limit to all things. As usual, I thought so."

He leaned forward to shake Miss McKenna's inky hand.

"That was capital," he said to her cordially. "That's the kind of stuff I like to hear."

"I hoped you'd be pleased," the girl replied simply. Her face looked down, the eyes very misty behind the absurd spectacles. Latimer wished that she was there to tell Miss McKenna how shockingly unkempt was her hair, how untidy her clothes. As he gazed at her, the girl shrank away, reddening dully, and pulled on her shabby gloves.

"I hoped you'd be pleased," she repeated, "though in hoping that I was very selfish, I know."

"You've earned my warmest praise, sure enough," said Latimer with a laugh, surprised at finding even the pale ghost of a joke coming from Miss McKenna. "It wasn't very selfish to hope for such a little thing as that, though."

"Your praise, no. But to hope that I — that you, some day——"

Latimer banged his hand on his desk emphatically, as his prize pupil ran from the room. He did not see how he could have failed to guess long before what was as clear as day now.

"She wants a fellowship after all, and hasn't confidence enough to ask for it. She needn't worry, though; I'll write her recommendation now."

His pen scratched along busily for some minutes before a sharp click and a double knock at his door made Latimer glance up from his paper. Then a square, black-bordered envelope fell through the letter-slide.

"You'll have to wait a few minutes now, Miss McKenna," he cried jubilantly, hastening down from his desk. "Dear girl! I wonder what she has to tell me."

It took a long time to read that letter, for Latimer stopped to read every paragraph twice, and once he kissed the page. His face shone as he folded the letter up.

"I'll go up there just as soon as ever I can," he said aloud. "It's a pity we can't announce it a little more—well, with effect; but her being still in black makes it impossible. Won't old Gildersleeve be astonished, though!"

He was going on when his eye fell on Miss McKenna's half-written recommendation. Very slowly and carefully he put away the black-bordered envelope in his pocketbook.

"I'll finish this right up," said Latimer briskly. "It's not half strong enough, either; I'll put some more glorification in the last sentence."

A few minutes before he had thought that he had done Miss McKenna's claims ample justice, but there was that in his letter that made Latimer feel very generous toward all the world. He was too happy himself to begrudge helping any one else to happiness.

On his way to the Deans' office, where he had intended to present his recommendation in person, Latimer met Miss McKenna, who was coming from the library. Her arms were laden with books, and, as usual, the torn binding of her skirt dragged on the dusty grass. He waved his note as she nodded to him.

"I've got two bits of pleasant gossip," cried Latimer; "both very spicy and personal. The first one concerns you."

On a sudden impulse he handed her what he had written. Latimer was very happy indeed.

"That is my return—my very small return for all you've done for me this year," he said, when she had finished reading. Then, as she still fingered the sheet confusedly, and did not answer, "There's one bit of news," he pursued gaily, "and the other's about me. I hope you'll be pleased with this also. You must be, Miss McKenna."

"Oh, Dr. Latimer, I——"

"It concerns me," he reiterated, a good deal embarrassed. "I want to announce my engagement to Miss Ethel Carter, of Lynmouth—the dearest girl, I'm sure, in all the world."

There was a long pause before the girl answered. She still looked at the paper in her hand.

"Your return, your very small return," she murmured finally, then tore Latimer's recommendation into small pieces.

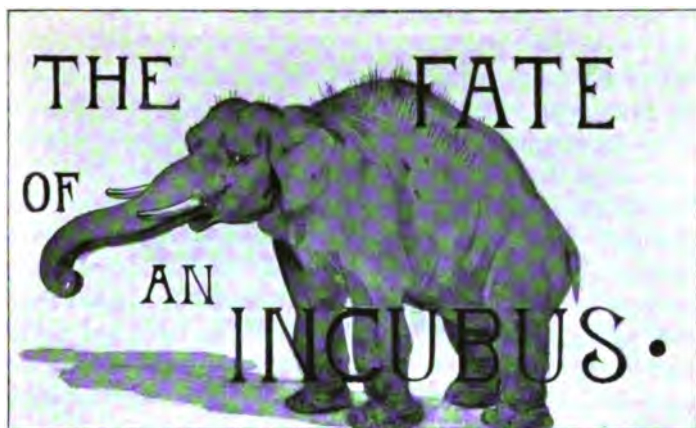
"I ought to have told you I'm not coming back next year," she said slowly, turning away.

The teacher in Latimer awoke instantly.

"But, my dear Miss McKenna, isn't this a very sudden decision?" he asked.

"Perhaps so. Please don't ask my reasons. But I've been a little—disappointed here," replied Miss McKenna.

"She might at least have congratulated me," Latimer said, gazing after her.



BY ANNE RICHARDSON TALBOT

CAPTAIN SETH MORRILL was a hale, rosy old gentleman with merry blue eyes, a very double chin, a portly figure, and a mien generally indicative of a benign and admirable disposition. "But," said the Captain, "appearances is deceitful, 'n' the Morrills is powerful sot."

Between the Captain and his friend and neighbor, Iry Wix, lay the disputed title to being the "sottest" man in Boxby, the one lending himself to the support of the revered if uncongenial family trait through a sense of duty, the other following the bent of his own obstinate nature. For many a year the two men remained content to meet and fraternize, while their friendship seemed carried on beneath a most precariously suspended sword. And the surprise of the townsfolk was not great when a hot and sudden quarrel over a small money transaction caused it to fall at last, cleaving them quite asunder, and leaving on either side a very raw wound, from which each suffered according to his nature.

"It ain't no sorter use," the Captain fumed, "sot as you be. Iry, I'm sotter. You owe me ten dollars on the old haybarn, 'n' I'll hev it, or my name ain't Morrill."

"It ain't, then. Barn wan't wuth ten dollars. I give ye

*Written for Short Stories. Illustrations by Wm. A. Mackay.

sixty. Guess I don't feel called upon to give ye the extry ten."

"A thing's wuth what it'll fetch, Iry. That's business, 'n' Jonas Butters he'd hev ben glad to give eighty."

"How 'bout you're sayin' you'd fix the floor, Cap'n. Guess it's jest about that figger you owed me, so I've kep' it."

The old man fairly danced with anger. His hat was pushed to the back of his head, his white brows were furiously knit, great drops of perspiration rolled down his face.

No greater contrast than Iry could have been possible; surprisingly long, surprisingly thin, the latter sat upon the horse-trough in the village square with his spare length of limb bestowing itself as best it could at various angles. He was chewing a straw meditatively, and he never withdrew his glistening, deep-set black eyes from the irate face of the Captain.

"I can't afford to lose that air money," Seth continued.

Iry rose, stretched his long arms and threw away his straw.

"Pity," he remarked, and sauntered homeward.

Captain Seth dug his stick angrily into the ground and stamped into "the store." It was close upon mailtime, and the old man knew that a sympathizing audience awaited him. Every man had witnessed the scene, and was anxious for an opportunity to discuss it. Every box and barrel was surmounted by a partisan, for with all his "sotness" no member of the village symposium was more popular than Captain Seth. He sank breathless into the armchair which the postmaster had just vacated, and wiped his shining forehead with his bandanna.

"I vum," ejaculated Ben Tabor tentatively, "ef Iry ain't the 'tarnalist agravatin' critter!"

Seth was not yet sufficiently composed to speak, but he gave an angry shake to his handkerchief, and an acquiescent shuffle to his feet.

"Iry's smarter'n thunder," Ben continued more boldly. "Why, he handles more money 'n all the rest on us put together, except you, Cap'n."

"No wonder," remarked the postmaster, peering through the pigeon-holes of his office. "There ain't a man in these parts can tetch Iry carpenterin', 'n' as fer coffins——" here words failed or were lost in the depths of the mailbag.

"Now it's coffins," expounded Israel Bay, "thet's so payin' Ef t'want for coffins I don't know's I should say Iry was so

over-'n'-above forehanded. But coffins is a thing there's a pretty stiddy demand for—folks can't somehow seem to do without 'em. Ef I was to say myself I don't know's there's anybody I should like to have make mine 'fore Iry. Yes, Cap'n, he handles considerable ready money. I should think he'd orter pay up."

Seth had now recovered himself somewhat. He replaced his bandanna in his hat, and crammed the hat down vigorously upon his head. Then he dealt his knee a blow which caused him to wince visibly.

"He hed orter pay up!" he said majestically. "He knows he'd orter. Now, listen all of ye: I'll hev what he's owin' me ef I take it out of him in my coffin."

A few days later Iry stood at his bench. As he looked out through his open window he saw broad green acres dotted with sleek, well-blooded cattle. His own small farm lay all behind his shop. All the good things within sight belonged to Captain Seth. Iry rejoiced in these evidences of prosperity. They helped him materially to quell the attacks of conscience which now and then questioned as to whether his course was right. True, his remembrance was that Seth had promised to mend that floor. On the contrary, Seth maintained that he had refused to do so. Perhaps to a less "sot" man than his whilom friend, Iry might have given the benefit of the doubt; as it was, he was determined not to yield. In the meantime it was a comfort that Seth's fields were so fair and green, his cattle so very sleek. Certainly he would not suffer if the ten dollars remained unpaid.

As the carpenter meditated, down the bosky perspective of the lane a farm wagon was approaching. It was drawn by a fat white horse, and proceeded deliberately as the prosperous Captain's wagon could well afford to do. Iry had ample time to decide upon his course of action. The first advance should come from the adversary. He turned sternly to his bench, and the white shavings curled and fell under his plane, until the voice of Silas Wiggin, the Captain's hired man, broke the silence. Iry looking furtively out from under his lowered lids was struck with something unusual in the lad's appearance. Silas was tall and stalwart, and possessed a well-tanned skin, which had never before been shielded from the fiercest sun which ever beat upon a hayfield. Now the broad shoulders were bent in a stoop, suggestive of bodily weakness or

great mental dejection, while over the bronzed face a wide-brimmed had drooped limply. He leaned despondently against the door jamb, digging a hole in the pile of shavings with the toe of his enormous boot.

"Ain't heard what's happened up to our place, hev ye, Iry?"

Iry did not raise his eyes.

"Huh!" he ejaculated indifferently, "don't know's I hev. Cap'n ben showin' up sotter'n common?"

"Well, yes; guess he has got 'bout as sot as he's likely to. Fact is, the Cap'n's gone, Iry."

The carpenter started now, yet he laid his plane down carefully before he spoke.

"Gone? Where? I don't know's you said."

"I don' know's I did," from behind the drooping brim. "'Tain't fer me to say. I hedn't nuthin' ag'in the Cap'n."

Iry laid aside his tools now. A strange suspicion was creeping upon him. He sat down weakly upon a saw-horse.

"What's Seth Morrill's comin's or goin's got to do with me?"

Silas sank into a still more dejected attitude.

"Wall," hesitatingly, "we didn't s'pose you was so sot that you'd refuse to make his coffin. Come, Iry, that's carryin' it too far."

Then it was not suspicion, but fact. Iry jumped to his feet.

"Cap'n Seth ain't dead? What he die of?"

"Well, I don't know what makes the Morrills so dretful full-blooded," Silas answered. "It may come of being so powerful sot. But it's ag'in 'em—full blood's ag'in 'em."

This post-mortem tribute to the characteristic which had been ever the bone of contention between the two men recalled the carpenter to himself more quickly than anything else could have done. His black eyes snapped, and he turned resolutely to his work.

"I ain't been hevin' dealin's with the Cap'n ivin' lately. I don't know's I feel to hev' any even if he is dead."

The fiat had gone forth. Silas was obliged to content himself with it. In his surprise he pushed his hat to its wonted position at the very back of his head, and his dejected stoop disappeared.

"Gorry!" he exclaimed and strode forth, clutched the reins

from the horse's back and applied the whip to that somnolent beast with such energy that both were soon lost to view.

When the last sound of the wheels had died away, Iry left off work, leaned his arms upon his bench and gazed out across the green meadows. The shadows grew longer, the light upon the grass more and more golden, as the sun sank toward the horizon. Twice he heard his wife call him to supper, but he did not stir. At last he began to move about, mechanically making his shop ready for the night. When he had done, he turned the key in the lock, and approaching the house thrust his head in the kitchen door.

"Mother!" he called, "hand me out a couple of nut-cakes, will ye, I've got business to 'tend to 'n' I'll eat as I go along," and armed with this frugal protection against hunger, he proceeded "down the lane" lost in a brown study.

It was a perfect night in early June. Perhaps Iry's heart was unconsciously susceptible to its peaceful beauty; at all events, a resolution which he had taken during his long meditation grew and strengthened as he went.

It no longer seemed so difficult a task to make his humble apology together with an offer of his services. By degrees he even came to take a certain enjoyment in his own generosity, and to think tenderly of his departed friend. As he drew nearer the Morrill farmhouse he wondered sadly how the old place would look without Seth. All at once he woke with a start from his revery. The place was in sight, and it not only could but did look much the same as usual. True, the main body of the big house appeared wrapped in a blind and solemn docorum, common to its class, excepting upon great occasions. This was as it should be; but from the more inhabited "L" part as well as from the great barn beyond, came the cheery bustle of people busy about the homely evening tasks. Consternation took possession of the carpenter. He felt as if he himself had passed away and returned to witness the want of respect paid to his memory. Behind the shelter of the overhanging apple-boughs, he waited he knew not for what.

Upon the flat door-stone by the kitchen door Silas was sitting, but no longer in appearance was he the afflicted Silas of the afternoon. No drooping hat now concealed the glory of that coppery head. The young man sat at his ease. He was calmly whittling a chip, and from his lips there fell in a

peculiarly clear, shrill whistle, the patriotic strains of "Yankee Doodle."

Iry fell back against the low stone wall. He needed its support. Of all the dirges of which he had ever heard, this rollicking air shrilled out upon the very door-stone of the de-



parted, seemed to him the least fitting, and he sank limply into the prickly embrace of a clump of raspberry canes.

Behind the whistler the door stood open, and upon a table in the background Iry could see the Captain's familiar hat. Against it leaned the stick which seemed so much a part of

him, that the carpenter felt it should be still in his hand even though he no longer needed it. Hat and stick to Iry wore a reproachful air. "Out of sight, out of mind," they said distinctly.

All at once Iry started. Was he awake or dreaming? He rubbed his eyes vigorously twice. His heart nearly stood still, for he saw emerge from the kitchen a portly form, which possessed itself of the late Captain's hat and stick, and then seated itself beside the disrespectful Silas. Moreover, Silas himself gave no evidence of distaste to this close fellowship with a ghost.

For a few moments chaos ruled in the carpenter's mind. Then, white and trembling, with a tremendous effort, he pulled himself together. He did not believe in ghosts, and he felt sure that Silas would not calmly accept the companionship of even so portly and florid a one as this. To no apparition would he have given so unmoved a welcome.

Iry's mouth had lost its pensive expression, and his black eyes snapped as they were wont to do when he was greatly moved. He peered warily through the quickly descending twilight to see more clearly the man whose coffin he had just magnanimously decided to make, and after a short scrutiny he fought his way out of the clutches of the raspberry bushes and gained the road again; but he did not linger until ghost and farmhouse were well behind him, then cutting a slender branch from one of the white stemmed birches glimmering through the dusk, he seated himself upon the top rail of a neighboring fence and gave himself up to the question in hand.

"I swan!" he ejaculated, "ef that don't beat all!"

Then followed a long silence. Iry whittled as industriously as if his occupation alone possessed his mind. At last he shut his knife with a decided snap, and threw aside the denuded switch. It had served its purpose.

As he trudged homeward the carpenter was no longer conscious of the beauty of the night. The little silver moon hung her slender bow in the West, and the faintest flush of the past sunset lingered in the sky. The young foliage rustled softly. Now and then a bird called sleepily to its mate, and once some shy wild thing rushed across the path and into the shelter of the woods. But Iry noticed none of these things.

Early the next morning the carpenter was at work. „Clear-

ing his bench of all the soft pine upon which he had labored the day before, he laid in some dark and heavy planks which he had had carefully stored away. An hour later Mercury in the person of a small boy, carried a fateful message to Silas Mead. The message was written upon a shingle and was worded thus:

"I guess I've ben hasty. Ef you want to you can tell Mis' Morrill I'll fix up that business for her, seein' it's for the Cap'n."

And when night came Iry's task was done. Before him there stood a coffin, which for richness of material and thoroughness of construction, would have done honor to the obsequies of an emperor. He had calculated well. Nothing was ever thrown away upon the Morrill estate. The Captain was even more savin' than he was sot. In the capacious barn and in that haven of desuetude known as that "shed chamber," was stored every utensil, every plank which had once fulfilled a duty for which it was no longer fit. All these articles "might come in handy." The date of their possible usefulness was forever moving on—into the future, to be sure—yet that which had once been "good stuff" was sure of an abiding place beneath the Captain's roof.

Now it is possible that the gruesome suggestiveness of a coffin had it been built of ordinary materials might induce the old gentleman to do violence to his passion for saving, but no ignominious destruction awaited this casket composed, as it was, of such superlatively "good stuff," and Iry chuckled to himself with keen enjoyment.

With candle-light Silas came, but he was no longer the nonchalant Silas of ghostly companionship. Instead, he seemed drooping under the burden of affliction. The coffin stood in the middle of the shop, and Iry turned the light of his lantern full upon it. Silas gazed at it in open-mouthed astonishment.

"Mahog'ny, I swan!" he ejaculated.

Iry shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't know's I gredge it," he said. "I don't s'pose I've ben feelin' fust best to the Cap'n 'n' I've made this real han'some—fit to set in the best room for show; but I ain't calk'latin' to charge ye more'n common. I can take it out in thinkin' how dretful tickled Seth would be. He was always one for gittin' his money's worth."

It was late when Silas reached home. No light awaited him,

and being fatigued with the burden of sustaining a part quite uncongenial to him, he decided to place his charge upon the piazza floor for the night. When morning came Captain Seth arose early in keen anticipation of enjoyment of his victory. When he saw the coffin he laughed like a conqueror.

"Ben spry, ain't he?" he chuckled. But suddenly his expression changed. "What's it made out'n?" he demanded of Silas.

Then he rapped the smooth sides gently with his stick. The wood was certainly unusually hard. He fumbled for his spectacles, mounted them judiciously on his nose, and peered anxiously over them at his acquisition. Silas looked on in expectant silence. Mrs. Morrill appearing, took in the scene at once.

"Well, Iry has done well," she gasped.

By this time the Captain had got painfully to his knees, and was making an exhaustive examination.

"It's mahog'ny, sure's a gun," he whispered in an awe-struck voice.

Mrs. Morrill sank to a seat upon the doorstep. She was pale with consternation, and she rubbed her hands together nervously.

"Now, Cap'n, I hope you're satisfied," she said. "It's a sight too good to split up. Whatever you be a-goin' to do with it passes me."

The Captain's face betokened great perturbation of spirit, but his characteristic "sotness" rose in arms. He took out his bandanna and wiped his spectacles, looking severely at his spouse.

"I shouldn't wonder ef it come in handy," he remarked.

The animated controversy which then ensued served to drown the noise of Iry's arrival. The Captain turned suddenly, and, seeing him, roke into a laugh intended to convey an impression of his enjoyment of the joke. To his surprise, the carpenter joined him heartily.

"You got me!" he exclaimed. "I guess you got me. Lucky you took me the way you did, Cap'n. 'Tain't likely I should hev given in any other way. I'm so sot, but you've got your money's wuth, Seth, 'n' p'rhaps a leetle more, seein' the kind of stuff's in that air coffin."

Mrs. Morrill breathed a sigh.

"It's a dretful pity, to my mind, puttin' of such stuff in a

coffin. It's too good to split up, 'n' I don't see how it's goin' to be made real serviceable just as 'tis."

Iry regarded her with a mien of sturdy integrity.

"Mis' Morrill, don't you let this little matter pester you a mite," he said. "I jest as soon's not load the thing right onto my wagon 'n' take it back. I wan't a-goin' to hurry the Cap'n 'bout payin' for it, anyway; but I jest as soon take it off'n his hands."

Seth settled himself more firmly on his feet, and struck the coffin lid sharply with his stick.

"Who's talkin' 'bout payin'?" he demanded. "I said I'd hev my money's wuth ef I took it out on ye in my coffin, 'n' I've got it. I presume I can find a use for it. There's no knowin' how handy it might come in, 'n' it won't take no harm waitin'."

And from that day forth Captain Morrill's mind was chiefly bent upon making the best of the circumstances. This task, though he would not confess it, was not a small one in itself, and it was made more difficult by the attitude of his better-half. Mrs. Morrill was not an unreasonable woman, she was moreover an eminently peaceful one; but the occasion which roused her ire to the point of rebellion was not an ordinary one. Her home was home no longer to her. In vain she hid herself grew daily more strained, she found her only satisfaction and sound of the throng which, drawn through amusement or curiosity, continually sought the house where a coffin was the unusual ornament of the piazza. It was more than she could ear. Anxiety penciled lines across her usually placid forehead, and while the relations of her husband and herself grew daily more strained, she found her only satisfaction in the conviction that the incubus was fast becoming a heavier one to her husband than to herself.

"Come on, Silas," the Captain said one morning. "I don't s'pose there'll be much to show for my money's wuth ef that air coffin's to set there much longer warpin' 'n' swellin'. I guess you better give it a hist under the four-poster in our room, ef Mis' Morrill don't seem to mind."

Mrs. Morrill drew in her breath suddenly; but she bided her time. She was, as it happened, one of those women not unknown to fame who view that debatable region "under the bed" as the possible vantage ground of burglars, and a region to be conscientiously if fearfully surveyed each night. One

such examination aroused her to action. Possible burglars are bad enough, but to confront a coffin nightly exceeded all the horrors of imagination, and before the storm of her wrath the incubus fled to the dim recesses of the attic, where the Captain made it a daily visit, during which he cudgled his brains in the hope of some idea which should enable him to say to Iry that "nuthin' hed ever come in handier."

But he was not successful. As time went on, Seth Morrill's coffin, like Mahomet's, had no settled abiding-place between earth and heaven. Once it sought the outer shed, where it was fondly persuaded to do duty as a tool-box, but here again



it became the Mecca of morbid pilgrims. Seth groaned in spirit, but his powers of invention were not exhausted. After the episode of the woodshed a bright idea occurred to him. Why should not that resplendently polished receptacle lend itself as well to the service of time as of death? Surely, the Captain reasoned, nothing could be more congruous, and for a short space of time he was content as he fitted carefully into it the works of a superannuated tall clock. Alas! for his fond hopes! Their fulfilment fell short, or rather went far ahead of his expectations. The conjunction of ideas was too painful, and he separated their material symbols as speedily as possible.

In his next attempt the harassed old man appeared as an upholsterer, and in "copper-plate" petticoats, comfortably cushioned and studded with brass nails, the incubus stood cozily by the nook, until again Mrs. Morrill sternly refused it even standing room in her own particular quarters.

This last act of insubordination upon the part of his gentle wife robbed the Captain of almost every vestige of his courage. He listlessly denuded his incubus of its trappings. His hands trembled as he worked, and he did not at all mind the tearing of the "good stuff," which he had so hopefully used in its masquerading costume. When it stood again revealed



in all its solid respectability, he sadly hid its shining surface under a goodly coat of grass-green paint, and bore it to a retired corner under the front stairs. It was not his intention that it should serve as a handy receptical for umbrellas and canes, but its massive proportions proudly refused to retire to the ignominy of such a seclusion.

The Captain felt conquered. His spirit was broken. His health seemed to be taking to itself wings. Autumn and winter passed, and the incubus still stood awkwardly out from its corner, a monument to the old man's failure. The Captain had exhausted all its domestic uses, yet he would not, and no member of his household dared, destroy it.

Spring came and a sense of desperation took possession of the old man. The revered family characteristic had not its former value in his eyes, and at last he resolved to make an attempt to rid himself of his Nemesis, which he even went so far as to acknowledge to himself that it was barely possible he, instead of Iry, might have been in the wrong.

Iry was hard at work when the Captain entered, and he did not feel it encumbent upon him to do more than nod over his shoulder. Seth's greeting was audible but somewhat shaky, and conversation languished. The Captain sank down heavily upon a pile of boards, and viewed the carpenter's spare figure as if it was outlined against the dingy square of the window.

"Iry," he remarked at last, "I've ben siftin' on the evidence, 'n' I'm pretty well-minded that you—kinder—thought you was right."

Dead silence reigned. Seth knew he had not said what he intended, knew, in fact, that he had said just the wrong thing. He trembled a little and watched the struggles of a blue-bottle fly ensnared by a cobweb in the window. Finally it freed itself, and fell upon its back. In the fly he saw somehow a symbol of his own attitude, and he watched almost feverishly the carpenter's treatment of it when it fell upon his bench. It was a great relief when he lifted it and set it free.

"Ain't so sot as ye was a spell back, are ye, Cap'n?" Iry asked, as the fly buzzed stupidly away. "Guess you'll have to let me try my hand at it now. I'm some slower'n what you be; but I'm pooty stiddy, 'n' I ain't goin' to take nuthin' of no sort, not even so much as an apol'gy from you."

The carpenter's eyes were not upon his whilom friend at this time, or he might have been moved to pity. From every pore the perspiration started, and he let his stick fall wearily to the floor.

"Oh, don't, Iry," he gasped. "I was jest 'bout ready to send ye back that air coffin. Won't ye call that square?"

But his tormentor laughed.

"Oh, I ain't no call for a coffin," he said grimly. "I'm pretty spry. Better keep it till you're ready for it."

"It's—it's powerful good stuff," the Captain urged. "I couldn't feel to hev it a loss to ye—jest for a joke."

No answer for a time, but the buzzing of the saw. Then all at once upon the silence there fell the stroke of the village church bell, tolling the age of some departed soul. When the

last echo of seventy died away, the vanquished Captain gave a mighty groan. It was his own age, and a self-pity akin to agony destroyed the last vestige of "sotness" in him.

"Iry," he fairly sobbed, "jest you let me give in. I guess you was right 'bout that air money. You let me pay it, 'n' I hope you forgit it of me, for I ain't—I ain't—oh, not nigh so sot as—as you be, Iry."

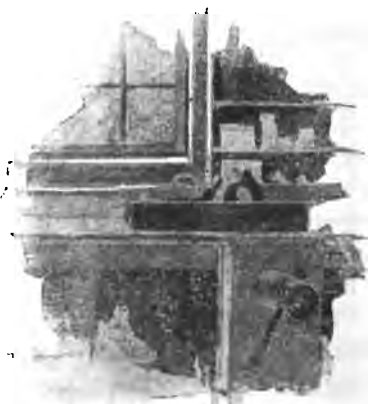
Down fell the saw and the plane dropped to the floor with a bang, while the carpenter put forth his hand to grasp that of his astonished visitor.

"Durned," said he, 'ef you shan't be the sottest spite of yourself, Seth! You swore you'd never pay me, 'n' you shan't, seein' I won't take it. As for that air old tool-chest case, sen' it down 'n' I'll make kindlin' wood of it."

How the Captain recovered from his surprise, he never knew, but from that moment the two men were the stanchest friends. Not many days thereafter, Iry visiting the barn which had furnished the object of their quarrel, found there Seth himself in the very act of repairing its decrepit floor. The boards in hand bore upon one side a vivid tinge of bright grass green, while several strips of a dark mahogany color stood out in sharp contrast with the other planks about them.

For a moment the Captain's face assumed a sheepish expression, which, however, soon gave way to one of supreme satisfaction, as he looked up with a twinkle in his eye, and setting his foot firmly down upon a dark brown strip of wood, he said:

"I guess I be the sottest, Iry, after all. It isn't every man kin let his foot down ag'in his own coffin!"



THE TOUCH OF TIME*

BY HELEN RAY KENT



PLEASANT, isn't it?"

Mrs. Roger Brice looked at her husband, her eyes twinkling with mischievous amusement. She was a woman who had learned to take life as it came to her, and did not worry over what she could not alter. Perhaps that was the reason why her cheeks were still so round and rosy, and the lines about her eyes and mouth were soft instead of hard. It was inconvenient to have to wait at this tiny junction of the branch road for four hours, but obviously it could not be helped. Already they had explored the single street of the little settlement twice; but the heat was intolerable, and they had returned to the station resigned to the inevitable. At least, Mrs. Brice. Her husband's frame of mind was better unexpressed.

Roger Brice was one of those methodical, practical men who have their whole day's action mapped out beforehand, like a military campaign. No spare moments, no idle musings for him! Not that he did not cultivate leisure to a proper degree. He took his vacation of two weeks (upon which they were just starting) each year with the same precision with which he read his daily paper, and kissed his wife good-bye before starting for his office in the morning; in short, his whole mature life had been one of monotonous routine. Hence when the complexities of outside existence disturbed his own, as in the present case, he was helpless in his well-bred, well-controlled vexation.

"If Roger only would lose his temper sometimes he wouldn't be so exasperating," his wife had often thought; "but, then, he's kept it bottled up so many years that it would be something awful."

*Written for Short Stories.

His love for her she never doubted, yet deep in her soul was the longing that something sometime might rouse it to a more fervent expression. Still, their life was so happy, so tranquil, if colorless, that she could not really desire any change—she only thought of it.

Mr. Brice smiled unwillingly at her question, and did not answer. He was hot, uncomfortable, bored. In that state a man who has been married fifteen years does not think it necessary to be conversational. Mrs. Brice recognized the mood, and tactfully responded to it.

"I'm going to talk to the ticket agent, or whatever he is," she announced, rising. "Perhaps he can tell me something interesting about the people who live in those houses. Just imagine it! Being shut up here all the year round. I wonder what they think about? But probably they don't think. Good-bye." And she walked slowly away.

Her husband followed the trig figure and easy gait with his glance, critically but not caustically. Then he lighted a fresh cigar and resigned himself more composedly to the discomforts of the situation. In an hour his mood would be almost cheerful, so beneficent are the effects of tobacco and solitude at the right time. Most women realize the potency of the first; but, alas! fail to discover that the second is still more powerful.

How long he sat there Mr. Brice never knew; but he must have fallen asleep, for he was roused suddenly by his wife's voice.

"Roger, Roger," she called, as she hurried down the platform toward him, "I've just had a long talk with the man in there, and who do you think he says lives here? Mrs. Page, Edna Larkin, of all people! Her husband is superintendent of the granite quarry two miles from here, and they live in that house with all the flowers growing round it—the white one. I thought you'd like to go to see her. There's plenty of time, unless you think it's too hot," she added, stooping to retie her shoe-lace.

Her husband looked at her in bewilderment. Edna Larkin! He had not heard her name for fifteen—twenty years; had not thought of her voluntarily for ten; but the same old thrill, faint and tremulous, went over him. How unreal it seemed! Yet there stood Carrie before him, awaiting his decision.

"Of course," he answered simply, rising. "I should like to

see her very much. How strange that we should run across her here! I haven't thought of her since—since——”

“I knew some nice woman must live in that house,” interrupted his wife briskly, helping him over the difficult pause.

“Now we must walk slowly. Isn't it hot?” And she smiled apologetically, as she tucked a tiny handkerchief around the collar of her shirt-waist. “It's almost gone, and I want to be respectable when we get there,” she explained, as they walked along.

The half-mile between the little shed that served as station and Mrs. Page's pleasant cottage was traversed largely in silence. It was too hot to talk, Mrs. Brice said, and her husband was trying to simplify his confused thought.

Edna Larkin! How he had loved that girl! As a lad in the country town where they were both born he had dreamed of nothing better, nothing greater than a life with her. It had been a boy and girl love affair that had grown as they grew, and when chance threw in his way the opportunity to enlarge his life and successes, his one hesitation had been that he must leave her behind.

“Only for a time,” he had told himself and her; and she had promised to wait for him with all a girl's rapture over her first sweetheart.

The sequel had been ordinary enough. She had tired of waiting, perhaps had never really cared for him, and married another man. In spite of himself, Roger Brice smiled as he recalled his misery at this crisis. Not because it had not been real, but because it had been so strong, so vehement. Looking back at it now it seemed to him incredible that any event could have so wrought upon him. Then had come the slow but sure rearrangement of his plans; his growing devotion to business; his gradual change from impulsive, ardent youth to conventional middle age. When the wound had healed he had married, in the same deliberate way that he now did everything; telling the woman of his choice his little story, as something due her. He remembered his very words:

“I cannot offer you the first, fresh affection of a young heart, dear. But what I do give you—what you will always have, whether you take it or leave it—is the deeper love of one who has suffered and overcome suffering.”

And she had said that was all she deserved or wished.

Certainly Carrie had made him happy. As he stole a look

at her he thought how few of his friends had such cheerful, helpful comrades. Oddly enough there flashed across his mind the memory of one night three years past when she had been very ill, and his forlorn anxiety. What was that early, passionate love, for years almost forgotten, to these long years of calm affection and fellowship? It was a mere bagatelle—a boy's dream. Yet——

"Here we are," said Mrs. Brice, as she turned up the neat path between two flower beds, gay with sweet peas and nasturtiums. "Won't she be surprised to see you, after all these years?" she continued, after ringing the bell.

The door opened promptly, and a tall, slender girl, evidently about sixteen, stood on the threshold.

"Is Mrs. Page at home?" asked Mrs. Brice, after waiting a moment for her husband to speak. Evidently he preferred that she should take the lead.

"Yes'm. Won't you walk in?" answered the girl, opening the door into a long, low parlor, and ushering them to two large plush armchairs. Not a window was open, and although the blinds were closed, the room was stifling.

"I'll go right and tell her you're here," she continued, disappearing after she had learned their name and errand.

Mr. and Mrs. Brice looked at each other, and the room, tentatively. She was the first to speak.

"What a pretty girl! Her complexion is like a wild rose; and her eyes and hair make such a striking contrast. Does she look like her mother? Oh, how hot it is!" and she picked up a photograph from the centre-table, using it as a fan.

"Yes; very like. Isn't she lovely?" answered her husband slowly. He was still trying to readjust himself to the condition before him.

"Why, Roger Brice, I declare! Who would 'a thought of seeing you?" said a shrill voice behind him, and he turned abruptly to see Mrs. Page standing on the threshold.

Could that be Edna Larkin? he asked himself while he shook hands mechanically with the newcomer, and murmured the conventional responses.

"I thought it was you when I saw you coming up the walk," continued the hostess turning toward Mrs. Brice, who had also risen, and nervously clasping the brooch at her throat.

"And this is Mrs. Brice? I'm happy to make your acquaintance, ma'am. I used to go to school with your husband. Isn't it a dreadful hot day? Won't you have a fan, and a glass of water? Edna," to her daughter, who had re-entered bashfully, "can't you get the lady a glass of water? Yes, this is my daughter Edna. Mr. Page, he would name her after me. We've never had any other children. How did you ever happen to come to Belmont Junction? And how did you know I lived here?"

Mr. Brice found himself answering in an absent-minded way, but intelligently.

"Poor fellow! I suppose he thought she'd look just as she did twenty-five years ago," thought his wife compassionately, as she fanned herself. She even smiled, as she remembered his description of Mrs. Page's beauty as a girl. Then she sighed a little. Mrs. Brice's first lover had given up his life at Gettysburg. "What changes time does make in all of us!" she thought, as she came to her husband's rescue.

How the time passed during that call Mr. Brice could never have told distinctly. His part in the conversation was decidedly passive, yet he talked just enough to banish constraint. Of this, however, he was only dimly aware. What he realized, was intensely conscious of, was the presence of the woman who had been his early sweetheart—the woman he had unwittingly idealized in memory. His ideal!

Not one detail of her present personality, from her awkward figure, red dimpled hands, thin straggling hair, faded eyes, and her kindly but barren talk, escaped him. Still more keenly did he realize the narrowness of her mind, partly due to circumstances, no doubt; but——

When she spoke of sending Edna away "to get an education," he started, and gazed fixedly at the girl; but his wife quietly suggested several schools, encouraged the idea, and finally brought the call to a close. Mother and daughter accompanied their visitors to the gate, and with kindly generosity filled Mrs. Brice's hands with the flowers she had admired. At length the final good-byes were said.

"What a pretty girl the daughter is!" ventured Mrs. Brice, breaking the silence on their walk back to the station.

"So quiet and ladylike. I hope she will be able to study, I'm sure; she seemed so anxious to be a teacher."

She paused, hesitatingly. Her inmost thought was, "I

wonder what Roger thought about the mother," but sure of her own position, she was too good-natured to ask.

Mr. Brice walked on without replying. He was still busy, trying to harmonize present circumstances with past. This is a difficult task always; but to a man of his unimaginative temperament it is well-nigh impossible, mentally.

Just before they reached the station he turned and looked at his wife long and eagerly; looked at her so intently that she felt his gaze, and smiled up at him encouragingly. Mrs. Brice had never been a beauty, never even a pretty woman; but there was a charm about her that no one who met her failed to recognize. This charm grew on acquaintance.

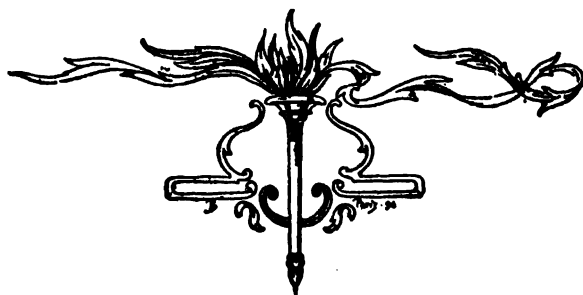
"Well?" she asked.

Mr. Brice did not answer for a moment. Then, as if the expression of his state of mind was wrung from him involuntarily, he made his only comment upon their call:

"To think that Edna Larkin could ever be so fat!" he said slowly, and relapsed into silence.

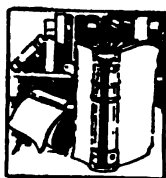
"Here's the train, dear," he added ten minutes later.

Mrs. Brice smiled at him affectionately. She understood the significance of that "dear."



AN INCIDENT IN THE LINES*

BY LUCY BUTT



It had been a blazing hot day, even for Ceylon. It seemed as if the sun would never set. When, at last, it neared the horizon, a breath of wind sprang up and half a dozen men lounged on to the veranda of a bungalow and stretched themselves full length on the chairs and rugs. Cooling drinks, cigars and a black boy within reach. A mass of flowers were lifting their tired heads in the garden, now that the heat of the sun was no longer scorching their little lives out—flowers, the color of which one seldom sees in any quantity in sober England — scarlet cactus, pomegranate, masses of purple passion flower, the latter clinging in wild confusion to the rail of the veranda. Strangely out of keeping with the rest was a little bed of mignonette which grew close to the house, so that its fragrant breath came through the windows in the evening hour.

There was silence until the sun had quite disappeared, and then :

"Why on earth, Wilson," said one man sleepily, "do you keep that little mongrel?"

"Sentiment, my dear fellow, sentiment," was the reply from the man who formed the centre of the group. He was stretched full length on a chair which was hardly long enough to allow of his six feet four inches. He was slightly built, and his thin face and slender hands were nearly as brown as the little brown dog curled up on his lap. His blue eyes were half-closed, and his large planter's hat was pushed off his forehead to enable him to catch the first breath of evening air.

"Sentiment! ah, indeed! I did not know that was in your line," with a laugh.

*From "Crampton's Magazine."

"Did you not, Dalton? Now you are enlightened—I am very sentimental—that is why I grow mignonette; it reminds me of home."

There was silence for a minute; visions of green fields, brooks and bluebells rose unbidden before their eyes, then at last:

"I wish you would not talk about home," said a lad, fretfully, "when it is so beastly hot. Tell me how you got the mongrel, Wilson; that will pass the time till it is cooler."

Wilson looked at the boy, and his mind flew back to the hours of homesickness he had endured during his first year in Ceylon; then "All right, French," he said; "but there is nothing much to tell."

"About a year ago it was a hot day like this, piping hot, and I had been staying with the Logans. About six in the evening, I was crossing the river, three miles off, a cool breeze sprang up, and I stopped a bit to cool the horse's legs; when I reached the other side I saw the coolies were carrying their bundles up the hill—it was carrying day, you see—and, as I watched, I thought how grateful I ought to be to Providence for having made me white."

"Brown, you mean."

"That is the sun, not Providence—don't interrupt. . . . When I saw a jolly little beggar, not more than six years old, trudging along by his mother's side. He was a jolly little beggar, quite naked, except for a string of beads round his waist, and a bangle, and in his arms he held this" (touching the sleeping puppy lightly with his hand). "As I looked, I saw it was a bit of a pull for him, and he plodded on so pluckily that I told his mother to give him a lift up behind me on the horse. You see, it was powerful hot."

"Don't apologize," said Dalton, "we all know you."

Wilson took no notice. "That is nearly the end of the first part; we did not talk much. He patted my horse and gurgled to himself as we rode along. When we neared the lines I asked him his name. 'Carupen,' he said, then I asked him what he called his dog, and I patted it and said it was a nice little thing."

"How could you so perjure yourself?"

"I think it is a nice little thing," serenely. "Carupen said its name was Paappy, and then the little beggar added, 'Nummu Dhurai sunada, ithi nulla jathi nai.'"

"Which, when interpreted, means," said the boy from home, "The dog is a good breed, isn't it, master?"

"I laughed, and put the little chap down, but somehow he looked a bit wistful, so I called after him, 'Dhurai thinks he is a fine breed.'

"He grinned from ear to ear and went in.

"About four months after, I was told one evening that a woman from the lines wanted to see me.

"'Dhurai, my child is ill,' she said.

"'Which is your child,' I asked.

"'Dhurai will remember, he had a ride on Dhurai's horse.'

"It is odd," went on Wilson, dreamily, "the ride should have impressed them so much, but I was sorry when I heard the little fellow was ill. I remembered how he had looked that day in the sunlight, dressed in his beads, and his puppy clasped to his naked little black body, so I told the woman I would go with her at once.

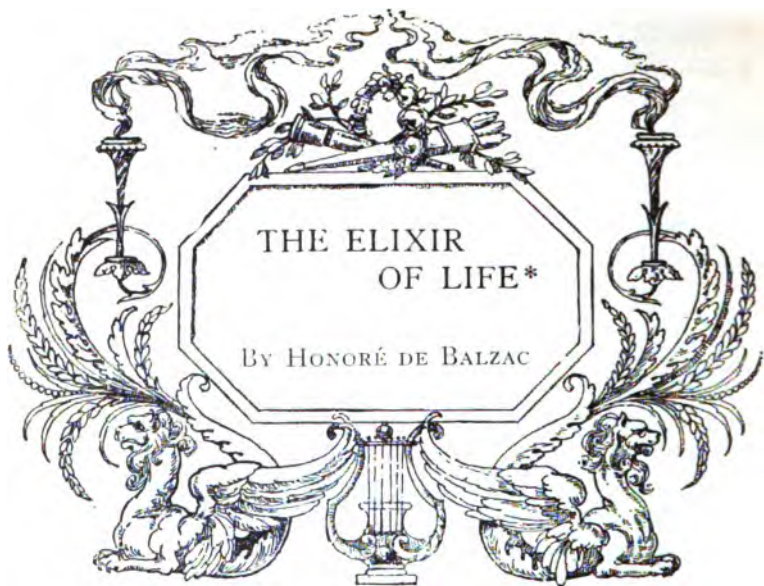
"He was very bad when I got there, but I gave him some stuff and he revived a bit. It was a hot night, and I lifted him up in his blanket, and held him in my arms to let him get some air; poor little chap, he held on tight to my finger with his little bit of a hand, nearly as thin as mine, and it had been so plump the day he held the reins. At last he said, 'Paappy Dhuri'; his mother brought it and he stroked it; and then he said, sleepily, 'Dhurai keep Paappy; Dhurai think him good breed, and he gave Carupen ride.' That was all, he did not speak again; I suppose he got a bit confused at the end, poor little chap, so I kept the puppy."

"I don't think he was much confused," said French; "he was pretty clear, I should think, and knew what he wanted."

There was a moment's pause, and then:

"I don't think he is such a bad little beast, after all," said Dalton. "Let's have a look at him."





Famous Story Series



IN a sumptuous palace of Ferrara, one winter evening, Don Juan Belvidéro was entertaining a prince of the house of Este. In those days a banquet was a marvelous affair, which demanded princely riches or the power of a nobleman. Seven pleasure-loving women chatted gaily around a table lighted by perfumed candles, surrounded by admirable works of art whose white marble stood out against the walls of red stucco and contrasted with the rich Turkey carpets. Clad in satin, glittering with gold and laden with gems which sparkled only less brilliantly than their eyes, they all told of passions, intense, but of various styles, like their beauty. They differed neither in their words nor their ideas; but an expression, a look, a motion or an emphasis served as a commentary, unrestrained, licentious, melancholy or bantering, to their words.

*Translated by Neil Carew, from the French, for Short Stories.

One seemed to say: "My beauty has power to rekindle the frozen heart of age."

Another: "I love to repose on soft cushions and think with rapture of my adorers."

A third, a novice at these fêtes, was inclined to blush. "At the bottom of my heart I feel compunction," she seemed to say. "I am a Catholic and I fear hell; but I love you so—ah, so dearly—that I would sacrifice eternity to you!"

The fourth, emptying a cup of Chian wine, cried: "Hurrah, for pleasure! I begin a new existence with each dawn. Forgetful of the past, still intoxicated with the violence of yesterday's pleasures, I embrace a new life of happiness, a life filled with love."

The woman sitting next to Belvidéro looked at him with flashing eyes. She was silent. "I should have no need to call on a bravo to kill my lover if he abandoned me." Then she had laughed; but a comfit dish of marvelous workmanship was shattered between her nervous fingers.

"When are you to be grand duke?" asked the sixth of the prince, with an expression of murderous glee on her lips and a look of Bacchanalian frenzy in her eyes.

"And when is your father going to die?" said the seventh, laughing and throwing her bouquet to Don Juan with maddening coquetry. She was an innocent young girl who was accustomed to play with sacred things.

"Oh, don't speak of it!" cried the young and handsome Don Juan. "There is only one immortal father in the world, and unfortunately he is mine!"

The seven women of Ferrara, the friends of Don Juan, and the prince himself gave an exclamation of horror. Two hundred years later, under Louis XV., well-bred persons would have laughed at this sally. But perhaps at the beginning of an orgy the mind had still an unusual degree of lucidity. Despite the heat of the candles, the intensity of the emotions, the gold and silver vases, the fumes of wine, despite the vision of ravishing women, perhaps there still lurked in the depths of the heart a little of that respect for things human and divine which struggles until the revel has drowned it in floods of sparkling wine. Nevertheless, the flowers were already crushed, the eyes were steeped with drink and intoxication, to quote Rabelais, had reached even to the sandals. In the

pause that followed a door opened, and, as at the feast of Balthazar, God manifested himself, He seemed to command recognition now in the person of an old, white-haired servant with unsteady gait and drawn brows; he entered with gloomy mien and his look seemed to blight the garlands, the ruby cups, the pyramids of fruits, the brightness of the feast, the glow of the astonished faces and the colors of the cushions dented by the white arms of the women; then he cast a pall over this folly by saying, in a hollow voice, the solemn words: "Sir, your father is dying!"

Don Juan rose, making a gesture to his guests, which might be translated: "Excuse me, this does not happen every day."

Does not the death of a parent often overtake young people thus in the fulness of life, in the wild enjoyment of an orgy? Death is as unexpected in her caprices as a woman in her fancies, but more faithful—Death has never duped any one.

When Don Juan had closed the door of the banquet hall and walked down the long corridor, which was both cold and dark, he compelled himself to assume a mask, for, in thinking of his rôle of son, he had cast off his merriment as he threw down his napkin. The night was black. The silent servant who conducted the young man to the death chamber, lighted the way so insufficiently that Death, aided by the cold, the silence, the gloom, perhaps by a reaction of intoxication, was able to force some reflections into the soul of the spend-thrift; he examined his life, and became thoughtful, like a man involved in a lawsuit when he sets out for the court of justice.

Bartholomeo Belvidéro, the father of Don Juan, was an old man of ninety, who had devoted the greater part of his life to business. Having traveled much in Oriental countries he had acquired there great wealth and learning more precious, he said, than gold or diamonds, to which he no longer gave more than a passing thought. "I value a tooth more than a ruby," he used to say, smiling, "and power more than knowledge." This good father loved to hear Don Juan relate his youthful adventures, and would say, banteringly, as he lavished money upon him: "Only amuse yourself, my dear child!" Never did an old man find such pleasure in watching a young man.

Paternal love robbed age of its terrors in the delight of contemplating so brilliant a life.

At the age of sixty, Belvidéro had become enamored of an angel of peace and beauty. Don Juan was the sole fruit of this late love. For fifteen years the good man had mourned the loss of his dear Juana. His many servants and his son attributed the strange habits he had contracted to this grief. Bartholomeo lodged himself in the most uncomfortable wing of his palace and rarely went out, and even Don Juan could not intrude into his father's apartment without first obtaining permission. If this voluntary recluse came or went in the palace or in the streets of Ferrara he seemed to be searching for something which he could not find. He walked dreamily, undecidedly, pre-occupied like a man battling with an idea or with a memory. While the young man gave magnificent entertainments and the palace re-echoed his mirth, while the horses pawed the ground in the courtyard and the pages quarreled at their game of dice on the stairs, Bartholomeo ate seven ounces of bread a day and drank water. If he asked for a little poultry it was merely that he might give the bones to a black spaniel, his faithful companion. He never complained of the noise. During his illness if the blast of horns or the barking of dogs interrupted his sleep, he only said: "Ah, Don Juan has come home." Never before was so untroublesome and indulgent a father to be found on this earth; consequently young Belvidéro, accustomed to treat him without ceremony, had all the faults of a spoiled child. His attitude toward Bartholomeo was like that of a capricious woman toward an elderly lover, passing off an impertinence with a smile, selling his good humor and submitting to be loved. In calling up the picture of his youth, Don Juan recognized that it would be difficult to find an instance in which his father's goodness had failed him. He felt a new-born remorse while he traversed the corridor, and he very nearly forgave his father for having lived so long. He reverted to feelings of filial piety, as a thief returns to honesty in the prospect of enjoying a well-stolen million.

Soon the young man passed into the high, chill rooms of his father's apartment. After feeling a moist atmosphere and breathing the heavy air and the musty odor which is given forth by old tapestries and furniture covered with dust, he

found himself in the antique room of the old man, in front of a sick bed and near a dying fire. A lamp standing on a table of Gothic shape shed its streams of uneven light sometimes more, sometimes less strongly upon the bed and showed the form of the old man in ever-varying aspects. The cold air whistled through the insecure windows, and the snow beat with a dull sound against the panes.

This scene formed so striking a contrast to the one which Don Juan had just left that he could not help shuddering. He felt cold when, on approaching the bed, a sudden flare of light, caused by a gust of wind, illumined his father's face. The features were distorted; the skin, clinging tightly to the bones, had a greenish tint, which was made the more horrible by the whiteness of the pillows on which the old man rested; drawn with pain, the mouth, gaping and toothless, gave breath to sighs which the howling of the tempest took up and drew out into a dismal wail. In spite of these signs of dissolution an incredible expression of power shone in the face. The eyes, hollowed by disease, retained a singular steadiness. A superior spirit was fighting there with death. It seemed as if Bartholomeo sought to kill with his dying look some enemy seated at the foot of his bed. This gaze, fixed and cold, was made the more appalling by the immobility of the head, which was like a skull standing on a doctor's table. The body, clearly outlined by the coverlet, showed that the dying man's limbs preserved the same rigidity. All was dead, except the eyes. There was something mechanical in the sounds which came from the mouth. Don Juan felt a certain shame at having come to the deathbed of his father with a courtesan's bouquet on his breast, bringing with him the odors of a banquet and the fumes of wine.

"You were enjoying yourself!" cried the old man, on seeing his son.

At the same moment the pure, high voice of a singer who entertained the guests, strengthened by the chords of the viol by which she was accompanied, rose above the roar of the storm and penetrated the chamber of death. Don Juan would gladly have shut out this barbarous confirmation of his father's words.

Bartholomeo said: "I do not grudge you your pleasure, my child."

These words, full of tenderness, pained Don Juan, who could not forgive his father for such goodness.

"What, sorrow for me, father!" he cried.

"Poor Juanino," answered the dying man, "I have always been so gentle toward you that you could not wish for my death?"

"Oh!" cried Don Juan, "if it were possible to preserve your life by giving you a part of mine!" ("One can always say such things," thought the spendthrift; "it is as if I offered the world to my mistress.")

The thought had scarcely passed through his mind when the old spaniel whined. This intelligent voice made Don Juan tremble. He believed that the dog understood him.

"I knew that I could count on you, my son," said the dying man. "There, you shall be satisfied. I shall live, but without depriving you of a single day of your life."

"He raves," said Don Juan to himself.

Then he said, aloud: "Yes, my dearest father, you will indeed live as long as I do, for your image will be always in my heart."

"It is not a question of that sort of life," said the old nobleman, gathering all his strength to raise himself to a sitting posture, for he was stirred by one of those suspicions which are only born at the bedside of the dying. "Listen, my son," he continued in a voice weakened by this last effort. "I have no more desire to die than you have to give up your lady-loves, wine, horses, falcons, hounds and money——"

"I can well believe it," thought his son, kneeling beside the pillow and kissing one of Bartholomeo's cadaverous hands. "But, father," he said aloud, "my dear father, we must submit to the will of God!"

"God! I am also God!" growled the old man.

"Do not blaspheme!" cried the young man, seeing the menacing expression which was overspreading his father's features. "Be careful what you say, for you have received extreme unction and I should never be consoled if you were to die in a state of sin."

"Are you going to listen to me?" cried the dying man, gnashing his toothless jaws.

Don Juan held his peace. A horrible silence reigned. Through the dull wail of the snowstorm came again the

melody of the viol and the heavenly voice, faint as the dawning day.

The dying man smiled.

"I thank you for having brought singers and music! A banquet, young and beautiful women, with dark locks, all the pleasures of life. Let them remain. I am about to be born again."

"The delirium is at its height," said Don Juan to himself.

"I have discovered a means of resuscitation. There, look in the drawer of the table—you open it by pressing a hidden spring near the griffin."

"I have it, father."

"Good! Now take out a little flask of rock crystal."

"Here it is."

"I have spent twenty years in——"

At this point the old man felt his end approaching, and collected all his energy to say:

"As soon as I have drawn my last breath rub me with this water and I shall come to life again."

"There is very little of it," replied the young man.

Bartholomeo was no longer able to speak, but he could still hear and see. At these words he turned his head toward Don Juan with a violent wrench. His neck remained twisted like that of a marble statue doomed by the sculptor's whim to look forever sideways, his staring eyes assumed a hideous fixity. He was dead, dead in the act of losing his only, his last illusion. In seeking a shelter in his son's heart he had found a tomb more hollow than those which men dig for their dead. His hair, too, had risen with horror and his tense gaze seemed still to speak. It was a father rising in wrath from his sepulchre to demand vengeance of God.

"There, the good man is done for!" exclaimed Don Juan.

Intent upon taking the magic crystal to the light of the lamp, as a drinker examines his bottle at the end of a repast, he had not seen his father's eye pale. The cowering dog looked alternately at his dead master and at the elixir, as Don Juan regarded by turns his father and the phial. The lamp threw out fitful waves of light. The silence was profound, the viol was mute. Belvidéro thought he saw his father move, and he trembled. Frightened by the tense expression of the accusing eyes, he closed them, just as he would have pushed

down a window-blind on an autumn night. He stood motionless, lost in a world of thought.

Suddenly a sharp creak, like that of a rusty spring, broke the silence. Don Juan, in his surprise, almost dropped the flask. A perspiration, colder than the steel of a dagger, oozed out from his pores. A cock of painted wood came forth from a clock and crowed three times. It was one of those ingenious inventions by which the savants of that time were awakened at the hour fixed for their work. Already the day-break reddened the casement. The old timepiece was more faithful in its master's service than Don Juan had been in his duty to Bartholomeo. This instrument was composed of wood, pulleys, cords and wheels, while he had that mechanism peculiar to man, called a heart.

In order to run no further risk of losing the mysterious liquid the skeptical Don Juan replaced it in the drawer of the little Gothic table. At this solemn moment he heard a tumult in the corridor. There were confused voices, stifled laughter, light footsteps, the rustle of silk, in short, the noise of a merry troop trying to collect itself in some sort of order. The door opened and the prince, the seven women, the friends of Don Juan and the singers, appeared, in the fantastic disorder of dancers overtaken by the morning, when the sun disputes the paling light of the candles. They came to offer the young heir the conventional condolences.

"Oh, oh, is poor Don Juan really taking this death seriously?" said the prince in la Brambilla's ear.

"Well, his father was a very good man," she replied.

Nevertheless, Don Juan's nocturnal meditations had printed so striking an expression upon his face that it commanded silence. The men stopped, motionless. The women, whose lips had been parched with wine, threw themselves on their knees and began to pray. Don Juan could not help shuddering as he saw this splendor, this joy, laughter, song, beauty, life personified, doing homage thus to Death. But in this adorable Italy religion and revelry were on such good terms that religion was a sort of debauch and debauch religion. The prince pressed Don Juan's hand affectionately, then all the figures having given expression to the same look, half-sympathy, half-indifference, the phantasmagoria disappeared, leaving the chamber empty. It was, indeed, a faithful

image of life! Going down the stairs the prince said to la Rivabarella:

"Heigho! who would have thought Don Juan a mere boaster of impiety? He loved his father, after all!"

"Did you notice the black dog?" asked la Brambilla.

"He is immensely rich now," sighed Bianca Cavatolini.

"What is that to me?" cried the proud Veronese, she who had broken the comfit dish.

"What is that to you?" exclaimed the duke. "With his ducats he is as much a prince as I am!"

At first Don Juan, swayed by a thousand thoughts, wavered toward many different resolutions. After having ascertained the amount of the wealth amassed by his father, he returned in the evening to the death chamber, his soul puffed up with a horrible egoism. In the apartment he found all the servants of the household busied in collecting the ornaments for the bed of state on which "*feu monseigneur*" would lie to-morrow—a curious spectacle which all Ferrara would come to admire. Don Juan made a sign and the servants stopped at once, speechless and trembling.

"Leave me alone," he said in an altered voice, "and do not return until I go out again."

When the steps of the old servant, who was the last to leave, had died away on the stone flooring, Don Juan locked the door hastily, and, sure that he was alone, exclaimed:

"Now, let us try!"

The body of Bartholomeo lay on a long table. To hide the revolting spectacle of a corpse whose extreme decrepitude and thinness made it look like a skeleton, the embalmers had drawn a sheet over the body, which covered all but the head. This mummy-like figure was laid out in the middle of the room, and the linen, naturally clinging, outlined the form vaguely, but showing its stiff, bony thinness. The face already had large purple spots, which showed the urgency of completing the embalming. Despite the skepticism with which Don Juan was armed, he trembled as he uncorked the magic phial of crystal. When he stood close to the head he shook so that he was obliged to pause for a moment. But this young man had allowed himself to be corrupted by the customs of a dissolute court. An idea worthy of the Duke of Urbino came to him, and gave him a courage which was

spurred on by lively curiosity. It seemed as if the demon had whispered the words which resounded in his heart: "Bathe an eye!" He took a piece of linen and, after having moistened it sparingly with the precious liquid, he passed it gently over the right eyelid of the corpse. The eye opened!

"Ah!" said Don Juan, gripping the flask in his hand as we clutch in our dreams the branch by which we are suspended over a precipice.

He saw an eye full of life, a child's eye in a death's head, the liquid eye of youth, in which the light trembled. Protected by beautiful black lashes, it scintillated like one of those solitary lights which travelers see in lonely places on winter evenings. It seemed as if the glowing eye would pierce Don Juan. It thought, accused, condemned, threatened, judged, spoke—it cried, it snapped at him! There was the most tender supplication, a royal anger, then the love of a young girl imploring mercy of her executioners. Finally, the awful look that a man casts upon his fellow-men on his way to the scaffold. So much life shone in this fragment of life that Don Juan recoiled in terror. He walked up and down the room, not daring to look at the eye, which stared back at him from the ceiling and from the hangings. The room was sown with points full of fire, of life, of intelligence. Everywhere gleamed eyes which shrieked at him.

"He might have lived a hundred years longer!" he cried involuntarily when, led in front of his father by some diabolical influence, he contemplated the luminous spark.

Suddenly the intelligent eye closed, and then opened again abruptly, as if assenting. If a voice had cried, "Yes," Don Juan could not have been more startled.

"What is to be done?" he thought.

He had the courage to try to close this white eyelid, but his efforts were in vain.

"Shall I crush it out? Perhaps that would be parricide?" he asked himself.

"Yes," said the eye, by means of an ironical wink.

"Ah!" cried Don Juan, "there is sorcery in it!"

He approached the eye to crush it. A large tear rolled down the hollow cheek of the corpse and fell on Belvidéro's hand.

"It is scalding!" he cried, sitting down.

This struggle had exhausted him, as if, like Jacob, he had battled with an angel.

At last he arose, saying: "So long as there is no blood——"

Then, collecting all the courage needed for the cowardly act, he crushed out the eye, pressing it in with the linen without looking at it. A deep moan, startling and terrible, was heard. It was the poor spaniel, who died with a howl.

"Could he have been in the secret?" Don Juan wondered, surveying the faithful animal.

Don Juan was considered a dutiful son. He raised a monument of white marble over his father's tomb, and employed the most prominent artists of the time to carve the figures. He was not altogether at ease until the statue of his father, kneeling before Religion, imposed its enormous weight on the grave, in which he had buried the only regret that had ever touched his heart, and that only in moments of physical depression.

On making an inventory of the immense wealth amassed by the old Orientalist, Don Juan became avaricious. Had he not two human lives in which he should need money? His deep, searching gaze penetrated the principles of social life, and he understood the world all the better because he viewed it across a tomb. He analyzed men and things that he might have done at once with the past, represented by history, with the present, expressed by the law, and with the future revealed by religion. He took soul and matter, threw them into a crucible, and found nothing there, and from that time forth he became Don Juan.

Master of the illusions of life he threw himself—young and beautiful—into life; despising the world, but seizing the world. His happiness could never be of that bourgeois type which is satisfied by boiled beef, by a welcome warming-pan in winter, a lamp at night and new slippers at each quarter. He grasped existence as a monkey seizes a nut, peeling off the coarse shell to enjoy the savory kernel. The poetry and sublime transports of human passion touched no higher than his instep. He never made the mistake of those strong men who, imagining that little souls believe in the great, venture to exchange noble thoughts of the future for the small coin of our ideas of life. He might, like them, have walked with his feet on earth and his head among the clouds, but he preferred

to sit at his ease and sear with his kisses the lips of more than one tender, fresh and sweet woman. Like Death, wherever he passed, he devoured all without scruple, demanding a passionate, Oriental love and easily won pleasure. Loving only woman in women, his soul found its natural trend in irony. When his innamoratas mounted to the skies in an ecstasy of bliss, Don Juan followed, serious, unreserved, sincere as a German student. But he said "I" while his lady love, in her folly, said "we." He knew admirably how to yield himself to a woman's influence. He was always clever enough to make her believe that he trembled like a college youth who asks his first partner at a ball: "Do you like dancing?" But he could also be terrible when necessary, he could draw his sword and destroy skilled soldiers. There was banter in his simplicity and laughter in his tears, for he could weep as well as any woman who says to her husband: "Give me a carriage or I shall pine to death."

For merchants the world means a bale of goods or a quantity of circulating notes; for most young men it is a woman; for some women it is a man; for certain natures it is society, a set of people, a position, a city; for Don Juan the universe was himself! Noble, fascinating and a model of grace, he fastened his bark to every bank; but he allowed himself to be carried only where he wished to go. The more he saw the more skeptical he became. Probing human nature he soon guessed that courage was rashness; prudence, cowardice; generosity, shrewd calculation; justice, a crime; delicacy, pusillanimity; honesty, policy; and by a singular fatality he perceived that the persons who were really honest, delicate, just, generous, prudent and courageous received no consideration at the hands of their fellows.

"What a cheerless jest!" he cried. "It does not come from a god!"

And then, renouncing a better world, he showed no mark of respect to holy things and regarded the marble saints in the churches merely as works of art. He understood the mechanism of human society, and never offended too much against the current prejudices, for the executioners had more power than he; but he bent the social laws to his will with the grace and wit that are so well displayed in his scene with M. Dimanche. He was, in short, the embodiment of Moliere's

Don Juan, Goethe's Faust, Byron's Manfred, and Maturin's Melmoth—grand pictures drawn by the greatest geniuses of Europe, and to which neither the harmonies of Mozart nor the lyric strains of Rossini are lacking. Terrible pictures in which the power of evil existing in man is immortalized, and which are repeated from one century to another, whether the type come to parley with mankind by incarnating itself in Mirabeau, or be content to work in silence, like Bonaparte; or to goad on the universe by sarcasm, like the divine Rabelais; or again, to laugh at men instead of insulting things, like Maréchal de Richelieu; or, still better, perhaps, if it mock both men and things, like our most celebrated ambassador.

But the deep genius of Don Juan incorporated in advance all these. He played with everything. His life was a mockery, which embraced men, things, institutions, ideas. As for eternity, he had chatted for half an hour with Pope Julius II., and at the end of the conversation he said, laughing:

"If it were absolutely necessary to choose, I should rather believe in God than in the devil; power combined with goodness has always more possibilities than the spirit of evil."

"Yes; but God wants one to do penance in this world."

"Are you always thinking of your indulgences?" replied Belvidéro. "Well, I have a whole existence in reserve to repent the faults of my first life."

"Oh, if that is your idea of old age," cried the Pope, "you are in danger of being canonized."

"After your elevation to the papacy, one may expect anything."

And then they went to watch the workmen engaged in building the huge basilica consecrated to St. Peter.

"St. Peter is the genius who gave us our double power," said the Pope to Don Juan, "and he deserves this monument. But sometimes at night I fancy that a deluge will pass a sponge over all this, and it will need to be begun over again."

Don Juan and the Pope laughed. They understood each other. A fool would have gone next day to amuse himself with Julius II. at Raphael's house or in the delightful Villa Madama; but Belvidéro went to see him officiate in his pontifical capacity, in order to convince himself of his suspicions. Under the influence of wine della Rovere would have been capable of forgetting himself and criticising the Apocalypse.

When Don Juan reached the age of sixty he went to live in Spain. There, in his old age, he married a young and charming Andalusian. But he was intentionally neither a good father nor a good husband. He had observed that we are never so tenderly loved as by the women to whom we scarcely give a thought. Doña Elvira, piously reared by an old aunt in the heart of Andalusia in a castle several leagues from San Lucas, was all devotion and meekness. Don Juan saw that this young girl was a woman to make a long fight with a passion before yielding to it, so he hoped to keep from her any love but his until after his death. It was a serious jest, a game of chess which he had reserved for his old age.

Warned by his father's mistakes, he determined to make the most trifling acts of his old age contribute to the success of the drama which was to take place at his deathbed. Therefore, the greater part of his wealth lay buried in the cellars of his palace at Ferrara, whither he seldom went. The rest of his fortune was invested in a life annuity, so that his wife and children might be interested in keeping him alive. This was a species of cleverness which his father should have practiced; but this Machiavelian scheme was unnecessary in his case. Young Philippe Belvidéro, his son, grew up a Spaniard as conscientiously religious as his father was impious, on the principle of the proverb: "A miserly father, a spendthrift son."

The Abbot of San Lucas was selected by Don Juan to direct the consciences of the Duchess of Belvidéro and of Philippe. This ecclesiastic was a holy man, of fine carriage, well proportioned, with beautiful black eyes and a head like Tiberius. He was wearied with fasting, pale and worn, and continually battling with temptation, like all recluses. The old nobleman still hoped perhaps to be able to kill a monk before finishing his first lease of life. But, whether the Abbot was as clever as Don Juan, or whether Doña Elvira had more prudence or virtue than Spain usually accords to women, Don Juan was obliged to pass his last days like a country parson, without scandal. Sometimes he took pleasure in finding his wife and son remiss in their religious duties, and insisted imperiously that they should fulfil all the obligations imposed upon the faithful by the court of Rome. He was never so happy as when listening to the gallant Abbot of San Lucas,

Doña Elvira and Philippe engaged in arguing a case of conscience.

Nevertheless, despite the great care which the lord of Belvidéro bestowed upon his person, the days of decrepitude arrived. With this age of pain came cries of helplessness, cries made the more piteous by the remembrance of his impetuous youth and his ripe maturity. This man, for whom the last jest in the farce was to make others believe in the laws and principles at which he scoffed, was compelled to close his eyes at night upon an uncertainty. This model of good breeding, this duke spirited in an orgy, this brilliant courtier, gracious toward women, whose hearts he had wrung as a peasant bends a willow wand, this man of genius, had an obstinate cough, a troublesome sciatica and a cruel gout. He saw his teeth leave him, as, at the end of an evening, the fairest, best dressed women depart one by one, leaving the ballroom deserted and empty. His bold hands trembled, his graceful limbs tottered, and then one night apoplexy turned its hooked and icy fingers around his throat. From this fateful day he became morose and harsh. He accused his wife and son of being insincere in their devotion, charging that their touching and gentle care was showered upon him so tenderly only because his money was all invested. Elvira and Philippe shed bitter tears, and redoubled their caresses to this malicious old man, whose broken voice would become affectionate to say:

"My friends, my dear wife, you will forgive me, will you not? I torment you sometimes. Ah, great God, how canst Thou make use of me thus to prove these two angelic creatures! I, who should be their joy, am their bane!"

It was thus that he held them at his bedside, making them forget whole months of impatience and cruelty by one hour in which he displayed to them the new treasures of his favor and a false tenderness. It was a paternal system which succeeded infinitely better than that which his father had formerly employed toward him. Finally he reached such a state of illness that manœuvres like those of a small boat entering a dangerous canal were necessary in order to put him to bed.

Then the day of death came. This brilliant and skeptical man, whose intellect only was left unimpaired by the general

decay, lived between a doctor and a confessor, his two antipathies. But he was jovial with them. Was there not a bright light burning for him behind the veil of the future? Over this veil, leaden and impenetrable to others, transparent to him, the delicate and bewitching delights of youth played like shadows.

It was on a beautiful summer evening that Don Juan felt the approach of death. The Spanish sky was gloriously clear, the orange trees perfumed the air and the stars cast a fresh glowing light. Nature seemed to give pledges of his resurrection. A pious and obedient son regarded him with love and respect. About eleven o'clock he signified his wish to be left alone with this sincere being.

"Philippe," he began, in a voice so tender and affectionate that the young man trembled and wept with happiness, for his father had never said "Philippe" like this before. "Listen to me, my son," continued the dying man. "I have been a great sinner, and all my life I have thought about death. Formerly I was the friend of the great Pope Julius II. This illustrious pontiff feared that the excessive excitability of my feelings would cause me to commit some deadly sin at the moment of my death, after I had received the blessed ointment. He made me a present of a flask of holy water that gushed forth from a rock in the desert. I kept the secret of the theft of the Church's treasure, but I am authorized to reveal the mystery to my son 'in articulo mortis.' You will find the flask in the drawer of the Gothic table which always stands at my bedside. The precious crystals may be of service to you also, my dearest Philippe. Will you swear to me by your eternal salvation that you will carry out my orders faithfully?"

Philippe looked at his father. Don Juan was too well versed in human expression not to know that he could die peacefully in perfect faith in such a look, as his father had died in despair at his own expression.

"You deserve a different father," continued Don Juan. "I must acknowledge that when the estimable Abbot of San Lucas was administering the 'viaticum' I was thinking of the incompatibility of two so wide-spreading powers as that of the devil and that of God."

"Oh, father!"

"And I said to myself that when Satan makes his peace he

will be a great idiot if he does not bargain for the pardon of his followers. This thought haunted me. So, my child, I shall go to hell if you do not carry out my wishes."

"Oh, tell them to me at once, father!"

"As soon as I have closed my eyes," replied Don Juan, "and that may be in a few minutes, you must take my body, still warm, and lay it on a table in the middle of the room. Then put out the lamp—the light of the stars will be sufficient. You must take off my clothes, and while you recite 'Paters' and 'Aves' and uplift your soul to God, you must moisten my eyes, my lips, all my head first, and then my body, with this holy water. But, my dear son, the power of God is great. You must not be astonished at anything."

At this point Don Juan, feeling the approach of death, added in a terrible voice: "Be careful of the flask!"

Then he died gently in the arms of his son, whose tears fell upon his ironical and sallow face.

It was nearly midnight when Don Philippe Belvidéro placed his father's corpse on the table. After kissing the stern forehead and the gray hair he put out the lamp. The soft rays of the moonlight which cast fantastic reflections over the scenery allowed the pious Philippe to discern his father's body dimly, as something white in the midst of the darkness. The young man moistened a cloth in the liquid and then, deep in prayer, he faithfully anointed the revered head. The silence was intense. Then he heard indescribable rustlings, but he attributed them to the wind among the treetops. When he had bathed the right arm he felt himself rudely seized at the back of the neck by an arm, young and vigorous—the arm of his father! He gave a piercing cry, and dropped the phial, which fell on the floor and broke. The liquid flowed out.

The whole household rushed in, bearing torches. The cry had aroused and frightened them as if the trumpet of the last judgment had shaken the world. The room was crowded with people. The trembling throng saw Don Philippe, fainting, but held up by the powerful arm of his father, which clutched his neck. Then they saw a supernatural sight, the head of Don Juan, young and beautiful as an Antinoüs, a head with black hair, brilliant eyes and crimson lips, a head that moved in a blood-curdling manner without being able to stir the skeleton to which it belonged.

An old servant cried: "A miracle!"

And all the Spaniards repeated: "A miracle!"

Too pious to admit the possibility of magic, Doña Elvira sent for the Abbot of San Lucas. When the priest saw the miracle with his own eyes he resolved to profit by it, like a man of sense, and like an abbot who asks nothing better than to increase his revenues. Declaring that Don Juan must inevitably be canonized, he appointed his monastery for the ceremony of the apotheosis. The monastery, he said, should henceforth be called "San Juan de Lucas." At these words the head made a facetious grimace.

The taste of the Spaniards for this sort of solemnities is so well known that it should not be difficult to imagine the religious spectacle with which the abbey of San Lucas celebrated the translation of "the blessed Don Juan Belvidéro" in its church. A few days after the death of this illustrious nobleman, the miracle of his partial resurrection had been so thoroughly spread from village to village throughout a circle of more than fifty leagues round San Lucas that it was as good as a play to see the curious people on the road. They came from all sides, drawn by the prospect of a "Te Deum" chanted by the light of burning torches. The ancient mosque of the monastery of San Lucas, a wonderful building, erected by the Moors, which for three hundred years had resounded with the name of Jesus Christ instead of Allah, could not hold the crowd which was gathered to view the ceremony. Packed together like ants, the hidalgos in velvet mantles and armed with their good swords stood round the pillars, unable to find room to bend their knees, which they never bent elsewhere. Charming peasant women, whose dresses set off the beautiful lines of their figures, gave their arms to white-haired old men. Youths with glowing eyes found themselves beside old women decked out in gala dress. There were couples trembling with pleasure, curious fiancées, led thither by their sweethearts, newly married couples and frightened children, holding one another by the hand. All this throng was there, rich in colors, brilliant in contrasts, laden with flowers, making a soft tumult in the silence of the night. The great doors of the church opened.

Those who, having come too late, were obliged to stay outside, saw in the distance, through the three open doors, a

scene of which the tawdry decorations of our modern operas can give but a faint idea. Devotees and sinners, intent upon winning the favor of a new saint, lighted thousands of candles in his honor inside the vast church, and these scintillating lights gave a magical aspect to the edifice. The black arcades, the columns with their capitals, the recessed chapels glittering with gold and silver, the galleries, the Moorish fretwork, the most delicate features of this delicate carving, were all revealed in the dazzling brightness like the fantastic figures which are formed in a glowing fire. It was a sea of light, surmounted at the end of the church by the gilded choir, where the high altar rose in glory, which rivaled the rising sun. But the magnificence of the golden lamps, the silver candlesticks, the banners, the tassels, the saints and the "ex voto" paled before the reliquary in which Don Juan lay. The body of the blasphemer was resplendent with gems, flowers, crystals, diamonds, gold and plumes as white as the wings of a seraphim; it replaced a picture of Christ on the altar. Around him burned wax candles, which threw out waves of light. The good Abbot of San Lucas, clad in his pontifical robes, with his jeweled mitre, his surplice and his golden crozier reclined, king of the choir, in a large armchair, amid all his clergy, who were impassive men with silver hair, and who surrounded him like the confessing saints whom the painters group round the Lord. The precentor and the dignitaries of the order, decorated with the glittering insignia of their ecclesiastical vanities, came and went among the clouds of incense like planets revolving in the firmament.

When the hour of triumph was come the chimes awoke the echoes of the countryside, and this immense assembly raised its voice to God in the first cry of praise which begins the "Te Deum."

Sublime exultation! There were voices pure and high, ecstatic women's voices, blended with the deep sonorous tones of the men, thousands of voices so powerful that they drowned the organ in spite of the bellowing of its pipes. The shrill notes of the choir-boys and the powerful rhythm of the basses inspired pretty thoughts of the combination of childhood and strength in this delightful concert of human voices blended in an outpouring of love.

"Te Deum laudamus!"

In the midst of this cathedral, black with kneeling men and women, the chant burst forth like a light which gleams suddenly in the night, and the silence was broken as by a peal of thunder. The voices rose with the clouds of incense which threw diaphanous, bluish veils over the quaint marvels of the architecture. All was richness, perfume, light and melody.

At the moment at which this symphony of love and gratitude rolled toward the altar, Don Juan, too polite not to express his thanks and too witty not to appreciate a jest, responded by a frightful laugh, and straightened up in his reliquary. But, the devil having given him a hint of the danger he ran of being taken for an ordinary man, for a saint, a Boniface or a Pantaléon, he interrupted this harmony of love by a shriek in which the thousand voices of hell joined. Earth lauded, heaven condemned. The church trembled on its ancient foundations.

"Te Deum laudamus!" sang the crowd.

"Go to the devil, brute beasts that you are! 'Carajos demonios!' Beasts! what idiots you are with your God!"

And a torrent of curses rolled forth like a stream of burning lava at an eruption of Vesuvius.

"'Deus sabaoth! sabaoth!'" cried the Christians.

Then the living arm was thrust out of the reliquary and waved threateningly over the assembly with a gesture full of despair and irony.

"The saint is blessing us!" said the credulous old women, the children and the young maids.

It is thus that we are often deceived in our adorations. The superior man mocks those who compliment him, and compliments those whom he mocks in the depths of his heart.

When the Abbot, bowing low before the altar, chanted: "'Sancte Johannes, ora pro nobis!'" he heard distinctly: "'O coglione!'"

"What is happening up there?" cried the superior, seeing the reliquary move.

"The saint is playing devil!" replied the Abbot.

At this the living head tore itself violently away from the dead body and fell upon the yellow pate of the priest.

"Remember, Doña Elvira!" cried the head, fastening its teeth in the head of the Abbot.

The latter gave a terrible shriek, which threw the crowd into a panic. The priests rushed to the assistance of their chief.

"Imbecile! Now say that there is a God!" cried the voice, just as the Abbot expired.



Anecdotes.

IN this department of short stories about people, compiled from various sources and contributed, an annual subscription to Short Stories will be given each month for the best original or selected anecdote sent in by any contributor. The Editor cannot undertake to return contributions or engage in correspondence over them. If the extract is valuable keep a copy of it. Communications should be marked "Anecdotes," care The Current Literature Publishing Co., Bryant Building, 55 Liberty St., New York, and should be signed with name or initials.

Kind to Animals.

Dr. Gruby, a physician of Paris, famous for his efforts to protect animals from cruelty, was logical enough to include insects in his mercy. He was, however, a little nervous, and when one day, in his parlor, a big, blue fly buzzed uninterruptedly on a window-pane, the doctor called his man-servant. "Do me the kindness," said the doctor, "to open the window and carefully put that fly outside." "But, sir," said the servant, who thought of the drenching the room might get through an open casement, "it is raining hard outside." The doctor still thought of the fly, and not of his cushions. "Oh, is it?" he exclaimed; "then please put the little creature in the waiting-room, and let him stay there until the weather is fair!"

A Predicament.

Mr. John Morrison, a successful commercial traveler, has spent a great part of his career in hotels, and one of his theories has been that the mind can be so trained that a hotel fire ought not to distract the reasoning faculties when presence of mind is needed. He impressed his theory strongly upon Mrs. Morrison by instructing her how to act if they were ever in a hotel that was on fire. He and his wife were aroused from their slumbers one night by an alarm. The hotel in which they had their rooms was on fire, and there was great confusion and tumult among the guests. "Now is the time to put into practice what I have always preached to you, my dear," said the gentleman. "Don't get excited. Put on all your indispensable

apparel and take your time. Don't lose your head. Just watch me." He calmed Mrs. Morrison's anxiety, handed her the articles necessary to her toilet, put on his collar and cuffs, took his watch from under his pillow and placed it in his pocket, put on his hat, and walked with Mrs. Morrison out of the burning building into the street. "Now, my dear," he said, when they were safe, "don't you see what a grand thing it is to keep cool, and act with a deliberate purpose in an emergency like this? Here you are dressed, and over yonder are several ladies in complete *deshabille*." Just then Mrs. Morrison for the first time glanced at her husband. "You are right, John," she said, "it is a grand thing to keep cool and act deliberately, but if I had been you I would have stayed in the room long enough to put on my trousers."

A Successful Bidder.

A lot of people were present at an auction sale of Japanese goods in London. "How much am I bid for this exquisite vase?" asked the auctioneer, holding it above his head. "Ten shillings," responded an elderly lady, sitting in one of the front seats. "That's a shame," cried the man with the hammer. "This vase, as a work of art, is worth four times the sum. Why, look at it. Will an intelligent audience allow such a sacrifice?" "Twelve-and-six," came in the same woman's voice. "Well, well, well! Can't you see that this is a treasure, and you stand here and allow it to be given away for such a paltry sum?" "Fifteen shillings." Again it

was the same bidder speaking. "Fifteen shillings! The very ideal!" ejaculated the auctioneer. "I never saw the like. Come, good people, what is the meaning of all this? One of the Mikado's special designs slighted in such a manner! It is a reflection on your taste." "Seventeen-and-six," said the solitary bidder. "I cannot let it go for that," was the man's reply. "It is too costly, too precious, and too rare in pattern. Wake up, or I'll put it back in the box." "A pound," the woman said. "Well, it doesn't seem as if I can get any more, so here goes. A pound—once, twice, three times! Sold to a lady there at that shameful figure." The lady stepped up, paid for and received her parcel, and departed, apparently without noticing the smiles of the audience.

Curiosity Misinterpreted.

A Boston lady of great respectability was recently traveling to North Dakota, a rigid prohibition State, and in the dining-cars this notice was posted: "No intoxicating liquors will be served while the train is passing through the State of North Dakota." The train had been rolling along through that interminable State a long time, when the Boston lady came into the dining-car for her dinner. Casting her eye out of the car window upon a somewhat changed landscape, she said to the waiter, with purely geographical interest: "Are we still in North Dakota?" "No, ma'am," said he alertly, and with a hospitable grin; "what'll you take to drink, ma'am?"

The Wrong Girl.

A love story comes from romantic Roumania. It all happened in the little village of Varesti de Rastvaca, near Bucharest. A young peasant, Damian Valda, loved a beautiful young person, whose parents, at least, did not "reciprocate his affection." Valda was denied the house, but he remembered that the little god laughs at bolts and bars, and

took comfort. The girl approved of a plan which he devised. He procured a covered wagon and a dozen friends, drove up one night and "rushed" the house. The girl, already muffled, was brought out, and, Damian industriously plying the whip, away they tore to his home. He lifted down his precious burden and gently drew the veil from her face. The features were those of the girl's mother.

In Need of Whitewash.

Speaker Reed recently met Representative Lacey of Iowa in the shadow of the entrance to the members' lobby of the House. He peered at the Iowa man, who bears a strong resemblance to the Secretary of War. Walking up and greeting him with a laugh that conveyed a suggestion of relief, he astonished the Representative by drawling out: "Lacey, you look so much like the Secretary of War that you ought to be whitewashed."

By Hook or By Crook.

A gentleman going through a leading street in Liverpool stopped to look at some pictures displayed in one of the shop windows. He had not stood there long before he became aware of the close proximity of a pickpocket. The gentleman watched him for a little while, then took out his purse and looked into it, as though counting if he had sufficient to make a purchase, then put the purse in the outside pocket of his overcoat, making much ado as though pushing it into a corner; on which he turned to look through the window again, seemingly loth to give up the bargain. The light-fingered one slipped up behind him, and, before you could say "Jack Robinson," had his hand in the capacious pocket. The gentleman buttoned up his coat and proceeded on his way, but had not gone very far before a man called to him: "Hi! there's a man with his hand in

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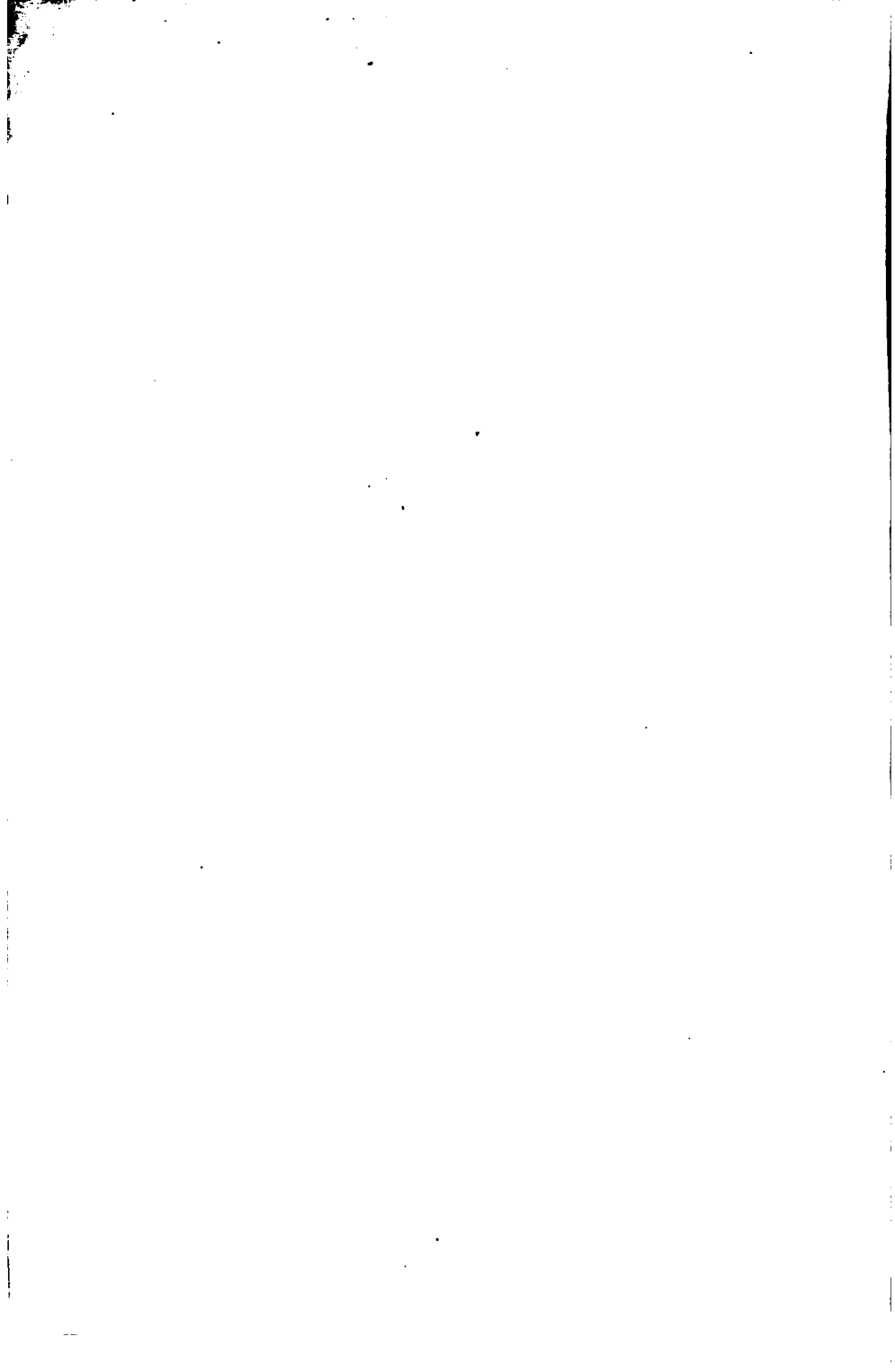
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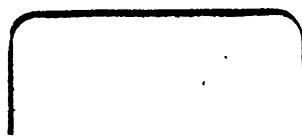
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